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[The following are translations of selected articles from the Russian-language monthly journal VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL published in Moscow. Refer to the table of contents for a listing of any articles not translated.]

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## MILITARY HISTORY JOURNAL

No 5, May 1989

**Shapalin on History of Military Political Work**  
00010013a VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL  
in Russian No 5, May 89 (signed to press 6 May 89)  
pp 12-17

[Article, published under the heading "On the 70th Anniversary of the Army and Navy Political Bodies," by Lt Gen N.V. Shapalin: "A Dependable Support of the Party"]

[Text] The Army and Navy political bodies are greeting their 70th anniversary in the march of perestroika. In celebrating this glorious date, we not only pay tribute to the glorious past of the political bodies but we also draw from the experience gained by them everything which has kept its vital force in our times. Certainly in their history there have been contradictions, difficulties and errors. Not all questions have always been given correct answers but one thing is indisputable: in all stages of the organizational development of the Soviet Armed Forces, the political bodies headed by the Main Political Directorate have been the faithful and consistent proponents of party policy in the masses of the soldiers and its powerful strongpoint in military organizational development.

The question of the formation of political bodies in the Army and Navy was repeatedly raised by V.I. Lenin in line with the necessity of establishing a strong regular Red Army for the armed defense of the revolution. Such an army was essential for young Soviet power, for it was then confronted with the harsh and difficult problem of whether socialism was to be or not to be.

Having assumed all responsibility for the organization of the revolutionary army and for all the policy of the military department, the party steadily sought out the most effective methods and forms for its influence on the life and combat activity of the Red Army. For this reason, the creation of political bodies was naturally and objectively necessary. This was shown by the very first experience of military organizational development during the years of the Civil War.

The young Red Army was in acute need of well-organized political education, for its proletarian units were comparatively small. At first, party political work in the Army was carried out by the military commissars and party cells. But from the summer of 1918, revolutionary practice brought to life an organizational form for ensuring the party's leading role in the army of political bodies. In particular, in July 1918, the political section of the Eastern Front was formed and this was the first political body of a front field formation. By the spring of 1919, the Red Army already had a rather large number of political bodies and party cells. It was essential to clearly define their duties, style of activity and structure. This was done by the 8th Party Congress.

Having thoroughly and carefully discussed the military question, the congress paid great attention to the activities of the party political apparatus in the Red Army. The head of the military department L. Trotsky was sharply criticized for the fact that frequently he did not consider the opinion of the army party organizations, he often ignored the rights of the commissars, and was condescending of the communist servicemen. On 21 March at a closed congress session, V.I. Lenin spoke. In speaking about the work of the military commissars, the political bodies and the army party organizations, he emphasized that they must first of all unite the army and indoctrinate the men and commanders in a spirit of high awareness of military duty, strictest discipline and constant combat readiness.

The congress took a decision to abolish the All-Russian Bureau of Military Commissars and establish the Political Section of the Republic Revolutionary-Military Council [RVSR]. A member of the RKP [Russian Communist Party] Central Committee was to head the RVSR Political Section with the rights of a member of the RVSR. The organizing of the new body was assigned to the RVSR. The center of gravity of communist work on the front was to shift from the political sections of the fronts to the political sections of the armies and divisions.

In April, by an order of the RVSR, the RVSR Political Section was founded and on 15 May, this was changed into the Political Directorate of the Revolutionary Military Council (PUR). From May 1918 through January 1921, it was led successively by I.G. Smilga, K.K. Yurenev, L.P. Serebryakov, A.G. Beloborodov and Kh.G. Rakovskiy. Political bodies were established on the fronts, in the armies and divisions. From the very outset they were given administrative-executive rights in the area of party political work. In the subunits "for daily and planned" political influence on the Red Armymen in the autumn of 1919, the position of political instructor was established.

The RVSR Political Directorate and the political bodies headed by it during the years of the Civil War played an enormous role in establishing, developing and strengthening the Red Army and in achieving victory over the revolution's enemies. It is scarcely possible to assess their activities more vividly and accurately than was done by the faithful associate of V.I. Lenin, M.V. Frunze: "Who invested elements of order and discipline in the ranks of our young Red regiments established under the roar of cannon rounds? Who during hours of failures and defeat supported the courage and cheerfulness of the men and put new energy into their shattered ranks? Who created the rear services of the army, who established Soviet power there and who created Soviet order, thereby providing for the rapid and successful advance of our armies? Who by their tenacious and stubborn work defeated the enemy ranks, disrupted its rear services and thereby prepared for the coming successes?

"This was done by the Army political bodies and was done, so to speak, brilliantly."<sup>1</sup>

The political bodies also carried out complex and responsible tasks after the Civil War. This was caused first of all by the major difficulties in the nation. The main areas of army organizational development under peacetime conditions were indicated at the Tenth Party Congress (March 1921). The theses for the congress concerning the reorganization of the Red Army were to be prepared by M.V. Frunze and the chief of the RVSR PUR, A.I. Gusev. Naturally, the question arose of the fate and further development of the political bodies. The party demanded that the political apparatus of the Red Army be kept in the form that it assumed over the 3 years of the war, that its organization be improved and strengthened, and that its ties be improved with the local party organizations in maintaining, however, the complete independence of the apparatus.

Such a situation was very crucial, for the party had to fend off numerous attacks to weaken the function and reduce the role of the political bodies as its strongpoints in the army. The proposals by the Trotskyites to eliminate the army political bodies and turn over their functions to the local party committees were decisively rejected. The party carried out the course of maintaining the political apparatus over the entire history of the USSR Armed Forces.

The new conditions in the life and activities of the Red Army demanded the greatest possible strengthening of party political work by the political bodies. At the center of attention of the party apparatus were the questions of demobilization, strengthening the quality level of the commanders and political workers and political education of the Red Army masses.

The political bodies were improved along with the reorganization of the army. They became smaller in size but more efficient and flexible. More democratic forms of activity were established. The chiefs of the political sections and political directorates began to report to the party conferences of the corresponding troop field forces. On 28 March 1924, the PUR was renamed the RKKA [Worker-Peasant Red Army] Political Directorate (RKKA PU).

In January 1924, A.S. Bubnov was appointed the chief of the RKKA PU and member of the USSR RVS [Revolutionary Military Council], and he was a prominent military and party leader of the Bolshevik Party and a member of the first Central Committee Politburo in party history. In August 1924, he, along with M.V. Frunze, K.Ye. Voroshilov, G.K. Ordzhonikidze and other party workers, were included in the Commission of the RKP(b) [Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik)] Central Committee which was working out the main areas of military reform. In the course of this, a transition was made to one-man command, a new table of organization was introduced, and documents were published regulating the life, training and combat activities of the formations and units. The political bodies were to play an active role in all these changes. In struggling to carry out the reform, they proceeded from the view that

only daily political work would provide an opportunity to carry out the planned measures. The actual introduction of one-man command required particular concern.

The reform strengthened the Red Army and created good conditions for the activities of the party-political apparatus and the political bodies. Their structure became more efficient and their style of activities in the masses was improved. Much was done to modernize political work, particularly in its main area of strengthening the political and moral state of the personnel and the combat readiness of the Red Army. For the first time, special chapters on party political work in a combat situation were introduced into the "RKKA Infantry Field Manual" (1927) and the "RKKA Field Manual" (1929).

In the 1930s, the nation was involved in gigantic tasks of industrialization, the transformation of the countryside and cultural development. In a short period of time, heavy industry, including machine building and the defense industry, was established virtually from scratch. This was the only possible way under those conditions, although it was unbelievably difficult for the nation and the people. Such a course was dictated by the urgent need to have a strong defense, a powerful modern army in order to save and defend the revolution.

The sharply heightened threat of military attack forced the Soviet Union to increase its Armed Forces. In just 4 years (starting from 1937), their size virtually trebled and reached 4.2 million persons. In 1939, with the adoption of the Law on Universal Military Service, an organizational restructuring of the army was completed to a professional manning system.

During this intense period of military organizational development, the political bodies did everything to increase the level of political work. "Learn a tank, an aircraft!" "Learn a motor!" "We are mastering new equipment!" These were the slogans in those years for the personnel of the Red Army. The commanders, the political workers and the Red Army men, like all the Soviet people, worked at full strength. Precisely during those years in the people and the Army the strength was aroused which made it possible later to save the motherland during the war.

At the same time, in the 1930s, the obvious contradiction was more and more felt between socialist patriotism and the enthusiasm of the people and the Stalinist willfulness, the growing harshness of the cult of personality and the arbitrary administrative methods of leading the nation and the army.

Naturally, Stalinism left its mark on the activities of the political bodies. Their work during those years was carried out with difficulty. The army remained basically a peasant one and the "extraordinary conditions" in the countryside could not help but be reflected in the attitudes of the soldier masses and left a scar in the minds of a certain portion of the servicemen.



The Stalinist repressions created a particularly large breach in the battle formation of the political bodies and party organizations. During those tragic years, the Red Army lost many talented military leaders, commanders and political workers who were dedicated to the motherland. From May 1937 through September 1938, some 36,761 persons were repressed in the army. Among the leading political personnel they lost 20 members of the district military councils, 20 chiefs of the district and fleet political directorates, 14 corps commissars, 65 divisional military commissars, 102 chiefs of formation political sections and 92 regimental commissars.<sup>2</sup>

In February 1941, the Chief of the Main Directorate of Political Propaganda, A.I. Zoporozhets, reported to the People's Commissar of Defense S.K. Timoshenko that the superior political personnel in the Red Army had been completely replaced. Among the military council members and the chiefs of the political propaganda directorates in the districts, 47.7 percent of the political workers had less than a year's experience, and 43.8 percent had worked from 1 to 2 years. The chiefs of the political propaganda sections with 1 year's experience were 59 percent and those from 1 to 2 years were 33.8 percent. The remaining 80 percent of the political workers had less than a year's experience. On 1 May 1940, 50 percent of the political personnel had received military training on a level of a regimental school.<sup>3</sup>

In July 1940, the RKKA PU was turned into the Main Political Propaganda Directorate of the Red Army and the political directorates of the districts became political propaganda directorates. This innovation did not strengthen party political work. It restricted and limited the possibilities of the political bodies and, in essence, did not strengthen their ideological influence.

On the eve of the war, there were also shortcomings in the content of the political propaganda. In the oral comments and in the army press the probable enemy was depicted in a primitive, distorted manner. Particularly widespread was the opinion that the war would be waged solely on the aggressor's territory. Possible fighting in an encirclement was excluded. The Nazi politicians and ideologists were little analyzed. At the meetings of the political workers in the border districts in May 1941, virtually nothing was said about the military threat from Naziism or about the bestial hate for communism and our country being inculcated in the Nazi Army.

Certainly this did not meet the tasks of preparing the troops for a protracted and stubborn struggle against such a strong and cruel enemy as the Hitler Wehrmacht was.

Strong-arm methods of leadership were also employed in the Army. The method of persuasion in working with the men was pushed into the background. For example, extreme measures were employed in 1940 to strengthen discipline. In one year, some 38,000 men were condemned (4-fold more than in 1939). Subjective views were reflected also in the directive documents which guided the political bodies.

But with all the severe consequences, Stalin's cult of personality did not sterilize or neutralize all political work in the Army. This work provided an enormous spiritual and cultural charge for the people and did not become a "concert for the deaf," as certain writers have endeavored to prove. The ideals of socialism and the Leninist ideas of defending the socialist fatherland reached deep into the hearts of the Soviet people. Tens of thousands of communists and political workers carried out enormous ideological educational work in the masses of soldiers, ensuring a politically stable state of the Red Army. By the beginning of the Great Patriotic War, in the Red Army and Navy there were two central political bodies, 21 political bodies of the districts and fleets, 25 political bodies in the armies and flotillas and over 800 in the corps, divisions, brigades and in the military schools.<sup>4</sup>

Our army had to wage a difficult struggle in the Great Patriotic War. It fought its way over thousands of kilometers and each of these cost many lives and a good deal of blood and sweat.

At present, much is being written and said about the "blank spots" in the history of the war of 1941-1945. Particularly many claims have been leveled against the treatment of its first, most difficult period and to explaining the reasons of the setbacks and major losses. Here a wave of emotions has been raised and not the facts, the truth is often replaced by semitruth and at times even by completely incorrect views. We must be extremely careful of public opinion and the patriotic feelings of the people who believed in socialism, who created and who fought not for life but to the death. In 1941, we truly were in a desperate situation. And here there are questions requiring an answer. This period can scarcely be judged correctly in a one-sided manner, just from the standpoint of mass heroism, but also we must not go to the other extreme, considering that the people and the Army at the outset of the war were in a completely suppressed state. The moral factor cannot be measured merely by counting prisoners. This was manifested not by itself, but rather in association with other, particularly military, circumstances. The Soviet people did not flinch, they did not collapse under the blows of the first defeats or under the burden of millions of deaths, tortures and sufferings. From the first day of the war they believed in the coming victory.

What has been said has direct bearing on an understanding of the role of the party and the political bodies as its strongpoints in the Army in achieving victory in the war. Always, when the situation became particularly complex and was unprecedentedly hard, the reserve of strength and steadfastness was found in the party group, in political influence.

The central task of political work in the very difficult first period of the war consisted in strengthening troop morale. The forced retreat into the interior of the nation, the lack of weapons and ammunition, interruptions in supply and the lack of firm troop command gave rise to many bewildering questions. Many did not understand

the reasons for the retreat. Under the influence of the high casualties and heavy setbacks, many subunits showed instability and individual soldiers showed cowardice and faint-heartedness. Serious shortcomings were also felt in the activities of the political bodies. Many of them carried the burden of bureaucratic deformations of the prewar years, they continued to gravitate toward peacetime forms, they had little influence on the state of affairs in the companies and batteries and did not show sufficient profundity and initiative in going into all aspects of troop combat activity.

The reorganization carried out in the very first month of the war in the Army and Navy political bodies was of great importance for strengthening the party influence and for improving the quality and effectiveness of political work in the troops. On 16 July 1941, by the Ukase of the USSR Supreme Soviet, the political propaganda, directorates and sections were reorganized as the political directorates and political sections of the RKKA. By this same Ukase, the institution of political commissars was to be introduced into all regiments and divisions, staffs, military schools and facilities of the Red Army and the institution of political instructors in the companies, batteries and squadrons.

The introduction of the institution of military commissars was an extraordinary form of party leadership of the troops. It was caused not by some mistrust of the command personnel but rather by the specifically existing situation and by the complexity of troop leadership. By the autumn of 1942, our Armed Forces had been completely strengthened and fully understood the reasons for introducing the military commissars. After the introduction of one-man command, immediately 3,000 of the militarily best-trained political workers were appointed to command positions and over 10,000 persons were sent to retraining courses.

In May 1942, Headquarters Supreme High Command [Hq SHC] released Army Commissar 1st Rank L.Z. Mekhlis from the duties of chief of the Main Political Directorate as well as from the other posts held by him. As a measure for strengthening political work in the Army, the VKP(b) [All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik)] Central Committee adopted a decision to appoint at the head of the Main Political Directorate, Aleksandr Sergeyevich Shcherbakov, a candidate Politburo member and secretary of the VKP(b) Central Committee and simultaneously the secretary of the Moscow Party Gorkom and Obkom. From the very first days of his work, he drew serious attention to the link of the political bodies with the troops, the commanders and the party organizations, in ascertaining whether the political workers were frequently on the forward edge and whether they were participating in settling crucial questions relating to the organization of political work under combat conditions. Upon his initiative, under the GlavPUR [Main Political Directorate], the Council of Military Political Propaganda was set up as a consultative body and its membership included experienced, theoretically trained party workers, chiefly members of the Central Committee.

During all the years of the Patriotic War, the party directed the activities of the political bodies, in seeing to it that these activities corresponded to the nature of combat and ensured a concrete and purposeful nature to party political work. The main work methods for the political bodies were the strengthening of political work in the forward units, vital work with the men fighting on the most dangerous sectors. The political workers operated depending upon the task and goal of the combat or operation at crossings, in assault groups and in holding key strongpoints. An enforced measure at that time was the reduction in the deputy company commanders for political affairs. They had always been the right-flankers of their subunits. They were the first to go bravely into the attack, they excelled in combat skill, they maintained troop morale well and during the hours of a lull acted as the organizers of troop leisure.

Of enormous mobilizing significance was effective agitation in a frontline situation. The passionate party word, the combat appeal, and up-to-date information on the existing situation raised up the men and led them forward. One of the most acute and essential tasks was to inspire in the soldiers and commanders a feeling of burning hate for the Nazi invaders. Under the GlavPUR they established a large group of regular and volunteer agitators. The agitator groups were also formed under the political directorates of the fronts and fleets and the political sections of the armies and formations.

During the war years, the questions of training for the political personnel were settled efficiently. Around 240,000 political workers were trained and sent into the operational army. They were next to the commanders in the front ranks of the defenders of the motherland, they educated the men in courage and heroism, in ardent hate for the invaders and an unshakable belief in victory. Over 100,000 of them gave up their lives for the sake of victory over the enemy. For courage over 200 political workers were given the high title of Hero of the Soviet Union.

The greatest possible strengthening of the Red Army and Navy political organizations was a constant concern of the party Central Committee and the GlavPUR. An ongoing increase in the party ranks was achieved due to the influx of communists from the territorial party organizations and the admitting of Soviet soldiers who had distinguished themselves in fighting. The army party organizations admitted to their ranks several-fold more members than the territorial ones. At the end of the war (September 1945) there were 2,636,292 communists in the Armed Forces.<sup>5</sup>

The Komsomol organizations were the immediate assistant of the party organizations and an inexhaustible source for filling out their ranks. The Komsomol of the Armed Forces raised in its ranks hundreds of thousands of glorious heroes, intrepid and courageous defenders of the motherland.

A thorough study and creative application of the experience of party political work under combat conditions is

of lasting significance. In turning to this experience, we always find in it that valuable thing which helps us solve the problems of improving the combat readiness of the units and formations under present-day conditions.

Thousands of party political fighters who went through the harsh schooling of the war for a long time comprised the treasure of political personnel in the Soviet Armed Forces. Many young commissars, political workers of the subunits, ardent agitators and Komsomol leaders became the leaders of large-scale political bodies and major organizers of party political work. At present, we mention with respect the names of S.A. Bobylev, S.P. Vasyagin, V.A. Grekov, P.A. Gorchakov, A.V. Deba-lyuk, I.M. Moroz, I.S. Mednikov, V.S. Nechayev, M.D. Popkov, A.I. Sorokin, G.V. Sredin and many others. Prominent political workers such as I.V. Shikin, A.S. Zheltev, F.F. Kuznetsov, K.V. Kraynyukov and A.A. Yepishev were also the chiefs of the GlavPUR.

The development of the political bodies in the postwar period continued in an inseparable link with the spirit and demands of the times and with the life of our nation. They firmly and steadfastly carried out the party line of strengthening the combat potential of the Soviet Armed Forces and educating dependable and loyal defenders of the socialist fatherland.

Of fundamental significance for the activities of the political bodies are the decisions of the 27th CPSU Congress and the 19th All-Union Party Conference. At present, party political work must effectively serve the restructuring in the nation and the Armed Forces and the defense and deepening of its main areas and most importantly the actual implementation of the designated program of qualitative parameters in military organizational development, the improving of combat readiness and the strengthening of organization and discipline.

The years of stagnation could not help but be reflected in the state and activities of the political bodies. Their authority was not aided by the gap between word and deed, by the unprincipled positions and indifferent attitude to such negative phenomena as abuses of office, the embellishing of figures, complacency and self-conceit of individual leaders and their isolation from the people. Under the effect of bureaucratic methods of leadership, the Leninist understanding of one-man command was distorted, and concern for the sociocultural sphere of troop life was moved into the background. The effectiveness of ideological work declined. All of this told on the activities and general situation of party political work, it gave rise to feebleness of practical actions and impeded the struggle against the already-named negative phenomena.

Undoubtedly, the times since the April 1985 Plenum have left their mark. The views and notions of party political work and their embodiment in real practice have been updated. And as throughout the nation, perestroika has created a fundamentally new ideological and political situation in the Soviet Armed Forces. The social awareness of the personnel has been awakened,

democracy and glasnost are being strengthened, and bolder and more objective assessments are being made of the state of affairs. Progress has been made in democratizing the internal life of the political bodies and party organizations.

Under these conditions the recent reports and elections in the party organizations were held in a new manner. After long years of neglect, the tradition of the reporting of the political bodies at conferences was restored. The pertinent questions in the practical activities of all the communists were discussed in a freer, more open and more critical manner. The accountability reports and draft decrees were largely prepared with the broad involvement of the elected aktiv. All the urgent problems were spoken of openly at the meetings and conferences.

The process of changes and radical renewals in the activities of the political bodies and party organizations continues and is gaining strength. Political methods of leadership are making headway, administrative methods are being overcome and arbitrary procedures are being stopped. This does not mean, certainly, the elimination of the political bodies from the questions of combat training and particularly discipline. They have always been involved and will be involved with them, but by using different methods. At present, attention is being concentrated on the problems related to the work with the personnel, to the development of the activeness of the servicemen in military service, to the conditions of the life and routine of the personnel and to strengthening democracy in all spheres of Army and Navy life. In the restructuring of party political work great attention is being given to a radical renewal in the spiritual sphere of the life of the Armed Forces. We have in mind a more active theoretical reorientation of the military personnel in a spirit of the new political thinking, an improvement in the very mechanism of influencing the awareness of the men, as well as the search for new approaches, forms and methods of educational work. At present, our ideological system does not require either the growth or correcting in using a gross number of measures. What we need is a sharp turn toward man, toward his psychology, the penetrating of his spiritual and ideological sphere and the social and legal defense of the serviceman.

From the time of the establishing of the first political bodies up to the present, they have come a great distance and acquired colossal experience. In assessing their activities now in retrospect, it would be just to say: as the leading party bodies of the CPSU in the Armed Forces, the political bodies headed by the Main Political Directorate of the Soviet Army and Navy have honorably carried out their purpose and provide a constant party influence on all aspects of the life and activities of the troops, a rise in their combat readiness, a strengthening of military duty and the political-morale state of the personnel. Even more responsible and complex tasks have been raised for the political bodies by the present stage in the life of the nation and the Army. The achieving of the qualitative parameters of military organizational development also means a qualitatively new

level in party political work. This impels the political bodies to assess their activities in a more demanding manner, to delve more deeply into the life of the troops, and to define more precisely the ways of further renewal and of increasing the effectiveness of party influence. Their role as the vanguard force in perestroyka in the Army is presently growing. And not only in the sense of a general historical trend, but also factually, concretely and effectively.

#### Footnotes

1. M.V. Frunze, "Izbrannyye proizvedeniya" [Selected Works], Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol II, 1957, p 121.
2. A.D. Lizichev, "Put peremen, vremya deystviy" [A Path of Changes, a Time of Actions], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1989, pp 291-292.
3. TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 32, inv. 1309, file 15, sheet 213.
4. "Politorgany Sovetskikh Vooruzhennykh Sil" [Political Bodies of the Soviet Armed Forces], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1984, pp 130, 132.
5. Yu.P. Petrov, "Stroitelstvo politorganov, partiynykh i komsomolskikh organizatsiy armii i flota" [Organizational Development of the Political Bodies, Party and Komsomol Organizations of the Army and Navy], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1968, p 338.

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#### Role of Air Aces in Fight for Air Supremacy 00010013b VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 5, May 89 (signed to press 6 May 89) pp 18-22

[Article, published under the heading "Soviet Military Art," by Col (Ret) V.N. Chernetskiy (posthumous), candidate of historical sciences: "The Role of Aces in the Struggle for Air Supremacy"]

[Text] The term "ace" (from the French as—bold, daring, literally the ace of spaces) became widespread in World War I. Pilots who had won three and more victories in air combat began to be termed aces.<sup>1</sup> Even then, the belligerents were confronted with the problem of combating aviation as this had become an important means for gathering intelligence information. Since the command frequently took decisions for combat only on the basis of information collected by the aviators, the reconnaissance aircraft began to come under attack and this came down to closing in on them and firing small arms taken by the pilots on board for the flight. One of the first air battles was conducted on 28 August (8 September) 1914, in the area of the town of Zholkva by the chief of the 11th Corps Air Detachment of the 3d Army of the Southwestern Front, Staff Capt P.N. Nesterov, against an Austrian reconnaissance aircraft. In this fight, the Russian pilot made the first aerial ramming in the history of aviation, but in so doing perished.<sup>2</sup>

Of particular urgency was the question of the arming the fighters existing in the aviation units such as the Nieuport, Moran, Fokker and Spada. Initially, the machine gun was mounted near the spotter pilots in the forward cockpit, and in the spring of 1915, the famous Frenchman R. Garros mounted a machine gun on his single-seated aircraft for firing through the spinning propeller. However, the employed synchronization system was not sufficiently reliable and did not guarantee the propeller protection against being hit. Nevertheless, the pilot in a short period of time on the previously harmless Moral downed three enemy airplanes. In response the Germans organized a real hunt for him and on 18 April of the same year this was crowned with success. The aircraft of R. Garros was damaged by antiaircraft fire and the Frenchman made a forced landing in the enemy positions.

The German designer A. Fokker who had arrived at the front carefully studied the downed aircraft and, after a short period of time, proposed a more advanced system of the interruptor gear which excluded the possibility of hitting the propeller. In the aim of maintaining the secrecy of the given invention, the command took the appropriate measures. However, soon thereafter the French succeeded in downing one of the airplanes equipped with the synchronizer and the secret was revealed.<sup>3</sup>

Since the reconnaissance aircraft, the artillery spotters, and in a majority of instances the bombers, carried out their combat missions individually, the fighters prepared to operate against them in the same manner. Here an important role was played by the reticence of the fighter pilots to share the laurels of victory with others. The individual dogfight gave rise to exceptional masters or aces. Dating precisely to the summer of 1915 is the start of the careers of the well-known pilots such as the French R. Fonck, G. Guynemer, R. Garros, the English E. Mannock and W. Bishop, the Germans M. Richthofen, O. Boelcke, E. Udet and others. Approximately a year later, certain of them already had scores of downed aircraft to their count (O. Boelcke—40, M. Immelmann—15, M. Richthofen—15).<sup>4</sup>

The aces were given the right to choose independently the area and time of operations. They usually tried to attack the enemy aircraft by surprise coming out of the sun or from behind clouds, approaching from the rear and opening fire from a range of 10-100 m. Firing at virtually point-blank range ensured the high probability of hitting the targets.

The great damage caused by the aces forced the belligerents to seek out methods of combating them. The basic one was the adoption of group tactics in the fighter aviation. The German pilots were the first to do this. They posed the individual French fighter attacks with air patrols and at the beginning of 1917, in a short period of time, were able to recover their air supremacy lost in the previous autumn. Alarmed by such a turn of events, the French Command also demanded the converting to



analogous tactics. However, it was not so simple to change the views and psychology of the aces, many of whom continued flying and fighting alone. Only orders to punish the violators of discipline and the loss of some of them made it possible to persuade the pilots that the era of solo heroes was over. A clear example was the death in air combat on 11 September 1917 of the best French fighter, the "meteor of the war," G. Guynemer who prior to this had downed 54 aircraft. It was on his Spada that the first air cannon was mounted with a caliber of 35 mm and firing across the motor shaft.<sup>5</sup>

In the following year, group air combat was already the rule. The attempts of individual pilots to fight in the old manner more and more often ended tragically. On 21 April, the German ace M. Richthofen was killed and he had 80 victories to his score.<sup>6</sup> However, group air combat in no way reduced the role of the individual combat and flying skill of its participants, for after the first attack it ceased to be such. Then the group, as a rule, split up and the individual duels began in which each pilot himself chose his opponent. In such clashes, naturally, the more skillful fighters were victorious.

During the war years, the Russian aviators had to fight on obsolete types of airplanes which had been supplied by the Allies and were markedly inferior to the German ones in terms of their performance. Nevertheless, among them there was a number of true masters of air combat such as K.K. Artseulov (18 victories), A.A. Kazakov (17), Ye.N. Kruten (15) and others.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, many Russian pilots, who for various reasons ended up in France and volunteered for its Army, fought bravely on the fronts and demonstrated examples of courage and combat skill. Among them were P.V. Argeyev, E.M. Pulpe and the legendary "air Cossack of Verdun" V.G. Fedorov, the heroic biography of whom was cut short on 7 November 1918 in an unequal clash with a large group of German bombers covered by fighters. In his last fight, V.G. Fedorov downed several enemy aircraft.<sup>8</sup>

As a total over the 4 years of the war, the aces of the Entente and Germany destroyed, respectively, 2,023 and 3,270 enemy aircraft.<sup>9</sup> This was more than 65 percent of the total number of aircraft downed in air combat (8,073, including 3,138 German and 4,935 Allied).<sup>10</sup> Combat experience showed that only the pilots who fully mastered the piloting techniques and took a creative attitude toward flying would become aces. For this reason it is no accident that many of them at one time established various aviation records and were the authors of new advanced aerobatic figures and tactical procedures. For example, the Frenchman R. Garros was the first to fly from Europe to Africa across the Mediterranean Sea.<sup>11</sup> The Russian K.K. Artseulov mastered the stall. Another compatriot Ye.N. Kruten not only executed the advanced aerobatic figures expertly but also developed over 20 methods for the attack and coming out of it for various types of aircraft.<sup>12</sup>

The first aces in Soviet aviation appeared during the years of the Civil War. And although the Red pilots

conducted just 144 air battles,<sup>13</sup> the victories won by them became vivid pages in the history of the Red Air Fleet. On all the fronts glory resounded for the Red military pilots A.D. Shirinkin, G.S. Sapozhnikov, I.U. Pavlov, A.T. Kozhevnikov and the other masters of air combat whose boldness, decisiveness and unflinching will for victory instilled fear in the enemy even if numerical superiority was on the side of the latter.

Thus, on 24 September 1919, the commander of the mobile fighter flight A.D. Shirinkin over the town of Dvinsk engaged three White Pole aircraft and thwarted an attempt to bomb the airfield and attack the observation balloon. In two air battles conducted on 1 and 14 May 1920 in the area of Priyamino Station (the Boris sector of the Western Front), he downed two (including one which was part of a group) enemy aircraft. For the feats performed the courageous pilot was awarded the Order of the Red Banner and honorific revolutionary weapon.<sup>14</sup>

Because of the enemy's superiority in technical terms, in air combat an important role was assigned to the morale factor. In the draft Regulation Governing the Employment of Aviation in a War published in 1919, it stated directly: "The law of victory...consists in affecting the psyche of the air enemy.... It is important to instill fear in the enemy pilots.... The morale element in air combat is everything."<sup>15</sup> This demand was met by the recommended methods of operations borrowed from the combat practice of the best pilots: "The general nature of fighter operations includes the most decisive assault on the enemy for firing at point-blank range; the previously employed harmless duels at 200 m should not occur in Red aviation."<sup>16</sup> Particular attention was paid to seeking out the possible enemy. It was felt that being the first to detect the enemy would mean to ensure initiative for oneself and was one-half of the success in combat.

Prior to an attack the fighters endeavored "to be above the enemy as much as possible—500-1,000 m." Closing in with the enemy airplane was carried out, as a rule, by coming up "from the side which was naturally considered the least threatened" by putting on speed in a descent. In entering the enemy's dead zone, the pilot closed in with the target and only then opened fire. Depending upon the situation, attacks on head-on courses were also employed. Subsequently, the main tactical procedures for conducting air combat were generalized in the Essential Rules for Carrying Out Combat Flights worked out by a special commission of the Staff of the Red Air Fleet and distributed to the troops.<sup>17</sup>

In the interwar period, a qualitative improvement in fighter aviation was commenced. At the same time, the proportional amount of this aviation in the air forces of many nations steadily declined and in the second half of the 1930s averaged around 30 percent.<sup>18</sup> One of the reasons was that right until the start of the war in Spain, the most generally accepted opinion was the crisis which had occurred in the fire aviation and the ever-greater loss in the importance of air battles in the struggle for air supremacy.<sup>19</sup> Correspondingly, the role of the air aces

was reduced in carrying out the given task, for the operations of attack aviation against airfields and bases were considered to be of priority. However, in practice everything turned out differently. In Spain, for example, fighter aviation was the main means of winning air supremacy. Just in 1937, the fighter pilots of the Republic Air Forces downed 315 rebel aircraft.<sup>20</sup>

Here the predominantly group nature of air combat in no way reduced the role of the aces. Around 75 percent of all the destroyed enemy aircraft was due to just 10 percent of the aviators.<sup>21</sup> Emerging as victor was the pilot who surpassed the enemy primarily in morale qualities and the level of combat skill. This was the distinguishing feature precisely of the skillful Republican pilots A. Arias, M. Saraus, F. Claudin, F. Tarason, J. Puig, A. Inteo, J. Curtado and others.

As is known, scores of volunteer Soviet aviators fought bravely in the ranks of the defenders of the Spanish Republic and a majority of them were fighter pilots. With their involvement in active combat operations, the situation changed sharply to the better for the Republican aviation. P.V. Rychagov (6 victories), V.I. Bobrov (he personally downed 13 aircraft and 4 as a member of a group), S.I. Gritsevets, I.A. Lakeyev and others became the scourge of the fascist vultures. The master of air combat A.K. Serov was the initiator of nighttime fighter operations and on 27 July 1937, opened up his own personal score. Some 28 of our compatriots who participated in the national revolutionary war became Heroes of the Soviet Union. By their feats in the Spanish skies they reaffirmed the leading role of the aces in the fight for air supremacy.

During this same period another group of Soviet volunteer pilots was providing international aid to the Chinese people in their fight against the Japanese invaders. By their efforts in a short period of time, over 100 enemy aircraft were destroyed and the Japanese aces K. Ieshishira, S. Sadao, K. Toshiki and M. Segeashi were shot down.<sup>22</sup> G.P. Kravchenko and S.P. Suprun proved to be the ablest organizers and participants of the air combat.

In May 1939, the Japanese carried out a new aggression attacking Mongolia in the area of the Khalkhin-Gol River. The USSR, loyal to its allied obligations, provided military aid to the friendly country. For a period of almost 18 months Soviet pilots fought against significantly superior enemy forces in the form of crack air units which had acquired great combat experience in China. However, they did not achieve substantial successes. Then our air grouping in Mongolia was quickly reinforced with several regiments of bombers and fighters and general leadership over it was entrusted to the Deputy Chief of the Red Army Air Forces Ya.V. Smushkevich. Arriving with him were several representatives of the Air Forces Staff and around 40 pilots who were masters of air combat and who had gained combat experience in Spain and China.

The group of Ya.V. Smushkevich carried out work in preparing the flight personnel for air combat. Its participants worked out the "Bases for the Organization and

Conduct of Fighter Air Combat" as well as effective tactical procedures and practical recommendations on combating the Japanese I-96 and I-97 fighters. Special instructions clearly outlined the actions of each air unit upon a combat alert and the procedure of cooperation with the antiaircraft artillery. They began setting up VNOS [air warning] posts.<sup>23</sup>

The entry of experienced fighter pilots into combat changed the overall air situation. For example, in just 5 days (22-26 June), the enemy lost 64 aircraft. By the end of the military conflict (16 September), Japanese losses were 646 aircraft, including 589 (91 percent) which were destroyed in the air.<sup>24</sup> Thus, fighter aviation made the greatest contribution to defeating the enemy air grouping.

The contribution of the aces to the fight for air supremacy was inestimable during the years of the Great Patriotic War. The thrice Heroes of the Soviet Union I.N. Kozhedub and A.I. Pokryshkin destroyed, respectively, 62 and 59 enemy aircraft in combat. The 26 fighter pilots who were awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union twice for combat accomplishments had to their personal count from 22 to 57 victories (totaling 1,051): M.D. Gulayev with 57, G.A. Rechkalov with 56, K.A. Yevstigneyev with 56, A.V. Vorozheykin with 52, D.B. Glinka with 50 and so forth. Over 800 aviators who were Heroes of the Soviet Union downed 16 and more enemy aircraft each.<sup>25</sup> As a total over the war years on the Soviet-German Front, over 44,000 enemy aircraft were destroyed in air battle.<sup>26</sup> It is easy to reckon that approximately one-third of this amount was due to the above-mentioned aces. This amount would increase further considering the pilots who had at least 10 victories but had not been decorated with the highest award of the motherland.

Confidence and skill came to each aviator as he acquired experience. Statistics shows that the losses basically were in the pilots who had a small number of combat sorties (up to 10) and conducted air battles (up to 3). With the crossing of the given limit, the probability of downing the fighters declined sharply. From sortie to sortie the pilots matured and became true fighters who did not know defeat. "...Each air battle," commented thrice Hero of the Soviet Union, Mar Avn I.N. Kozhedub, "was the greatest testing of will, of political and moral-psychological tempering, of courage, of military and flight skill of the aviators.... Victory was on the side of the one who personally mastered the aircraft and weapons, the first to attack the enemy, the first to employ the essential maneuver and seize initiative."<sup>28</sup>

In this context of interest is the information published in one of the foreign journals. Having analyzed the activities of 1,000 military pilots under real combat conditions, the authors established that approximately half of them had been downed in the first air battle. After the second, 78 percent of the most able remained in combat, 91 percent after the third, 97 percent after the fourth and 100 percent after the fifth.<sup>29</sup>



Modern air combat is a duel not just of aviation equipment and weapons but primarily of pilots. Victory in it goes to the one who is able to impose his will on the enemy, to suppress his psyche, force him to doubt his own forces, to create fear, desperation, hopelessness and confusion in him. This confronts the entire system of combat and political training of the air units with the task of constantly improving the skill of the flight personnel and indoctrinating enterprising and tactically intelligent air fighters.

#### Footnotes

1. See: "Voyennyy entsiklopedicheskiy slovar" [Military Encyclopedic Dictionary], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1983, p 51.
  2. See: VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, No 2, 1987, pp 89, 90.
  3. See: Yu.M. Galperin, "Vozdushnyy kazak Verdena" [The Air Cossack of Verdun], Moscow, Molodaya Gvardiya, 1981, pp 182, 183.
  4. K. Trunov, "Air Combat," VESTNIK VOZDUSHNOGO FLOTA, No 5, 1934, p 17.
  5. Yu.M. Galperin, op. cit., p 278.
  6. K. Trunov, op. cit., p 17.
  7. "sovetskaya Voyennaya Entsiklopediya" [Soviet Military Encyclopedia], Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol 1, 1976, p 300.
  8. Yu.M. Galperin, op. cit., pp 281-283.
  9. A.M. Lapchinskiy, "Vozdushnyy boy" [Air Combat], Moscow, Gosvoenizdat, 1934, pp 37-38.
  10. P.P. Ionov, "Istrebitelnaya aviatsiya" [Fighter Aviation], Moscow, Gosvoenizdat, 1940, p 10.
  11. See: Yu.M. Galperin, op. cit., p 107.
  12. "Sovetskaya Voyennaya Entsiklopediya," Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol 4, 1977, p 483.
  13. "Aviatsiya i kosmonavtika SSSR" [USSR Aviation and Cosmonautics], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1968, p 50.
  14. TsGASA [Central State Archives of the Soviet Army], folio 29, inv. 4, file 194, sheet 30; file 369, sheet 7.
  15. "Nastavleniye po primeneniyu aviatsii na voyne Raboche-Krestyanskoy Krasnoy Armii (proyekt)" [Regulation on the Employment of Aviation in the Innerwar of the Worker-Peasant Red Army (Draft)], Izd. Polevogo Upravl. Aviatsii i Vozdukhoplavaniya pri Shtabe Rev. Voen. Sov. Resp., 1919, pp 27, 29.
  16. Ibid., p 28.
  17. TsGASA, folio 30, inv. 3, file 522, sheets 7-12.
  18. P.P. Ionov, op. cit., p 13.
  19. Ibid.
  20. S. Lyubarskiy, "Nekotoryye operativno-takticheskiye vyvody iz opyta voyny v Ispanii" [Certain Operational-Tactical Conclusions From the Experience of the War in Spain], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1939, p 29.
  21. P.P. Ionov, op. cit., p 38.
  22. V.S. Shumikhin, "Sovetskaya voyennaya aviatsiya 1917-1941" [Soviet Military Aviation 1917-1941], Moscow, Nauka, 1986, p 252.
  23. TsGASA, folio 29, inv. 34, file 354, sheets 102-111; 117-127.
  24. V.S. Shumikhin, op. cit., p 254.
  25. "Sovetskaya Voyennaya Entsiklopediya," Vol 1, 1976, p 300.
  26. I.V. Timokhovich, "Operativnoye iskusstvo Sovetskikh VVS v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne" [Operational Art of the Soviet Air Forces in the Great Patriotic War], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1976, p 85.
  27. [Not in text]
  28. AVIATSIYA I KOSMONAVTIKA, No 2, 1971, p 4.
  29. B.L. Pokrovskiy, "Letchiku o psikhologii" [Psychology for the Pilot], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1974, p 41.
- COPYRIGHT: "Voyenno-istoricheskiy zhurnal", 1989.

#### Preparation for Outbreak of WWII Examined 00010013c VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 5, May 89 (signed to press 6 May 89) pp 23-32

[Article, published under the heading "In Search for the Truth," prepared by Col V.P. Krikunov: "The Frontline Veterans Replied Thus!; Five Questions of the General Staff"]

[Text] **Second Question. From what time and on the basis of what orders did the cover troops begin moving up to the state frontier and what number of them had been deployed before the start of hostilities?**

This question was answered as follows by the former commanders and chiefs of the Baltic Special Military District (PribOVO).

**Col Gen Tank Trps P.P. Poluboyarov** (former chief of the motor vehicle and armored troops of the PribOVO). At 2300 hours on 16 June, the command of the XII Mechanized Corps received a directive to bring the formation to a state of combat readiness. The corps commander, Maj Gen N.M. Shestopalov, was informed about this at 2300 hours on 17 June upon his arrival from the 202d Motorized Division where he was inspecting mobilizational readiness. On 18 June, the corps commander

alerted the formation and the units and ordered that they be led to the planned areas. This was carried out during 19 and 20 June.

On 16 June by orders of the district staff the III Mechanized Corps was also put on combat alert (commander, Maj Gen Tank Trps A.V. Kurkin) and during the same time it concentrated in the designated area.

1953

**Lt Gen P.P. Sobennikov** (former commander of the 8th Army). In the morning of 18 June 1941, the army chief of staff and I set off for the border area to inspect the course of the defensive works at the Shyaulay Fortified Area. Near Shyaulay, I was overtaken by a car which soon stopped. Getting out of it was Col Gen F.I. Kuznetsov (commander of the PribOVO.—V.K.). I also got out of my car and went up to him. F.I. Kuznetsov called me aside and excitedly told me that certain German mechanized units had been concentrated in Suvalki. He ordered me to immediately bring the formations up to the frontier and the army staff by the morning of 19 June was to be located at a command post 12 km to the southwest of Shyaulay.

The district commander decided to drive to Taurage and there alert the XI Rifle Corps of Maj Gen M.S. Shumilov and he ordered me to leave for the right flank of the army. We sent the army chief of staff Maj Gen G.A. Larionov back to Yelgava. He was given the task of bringing the staff to the command post.

By the end of the day, oral instructions had been issued to concentrate the troops on the frontier. In the morning of 19 June, I personally inspected the course of carrying out the order. Units of the 10th, 90th and 125th Rifle Divisions took up their trenches and timber and earth pillboxes [DZOT], although many structures were not finally complete. Units of the XII Mechanized Corps during the night of 19 June moved up to the Shyaulay region and at the same time the army staff arrived at the command post.

It must be pointed out that no one received any written instructions on the deployment of the formations. Everything was carried out on the basis of a verbal order from the district commander. Subsequently, by telephone and telegraph we began to receive contradictory instructions on the organizing of timber obstacles, mining and so forth. It was difficult to understand them. They were canceled, reaffirmed and then canceled again. During the night of 22 June, I personally received orders from the district chief of staff, Lt Gen P.S. Klenov, to pull the troops back from the frontier. Generally speaking, one could feel the nervousness, the fear of "provoking a war," and, as a consequence, a lack of coordination in actions arose.

1953

**Lt Gen V.I. Morozov** (former commander of the 11th Army). On the basis of the oral instructions by the

district commander, formations of the 11th Army moved up to the prepared defensive perimeter. This was done under the pretext of improving the field fortifications.

On the frontier there was one regiment from each division reinforced, as a rule, by an artillery battalion. At the start of June, some regiments began to be replaced by others.

At the beginning of June 1941, the divisions in their areas had fully deployed command posts with officers constantly on duty.

1952

**Lt Gen I.P. Shlemin** (former chief of staff of the 11th Army). I do not recall any order for moving the troops up to the state frontier. From all appearances this did not exist, as the 28th and 33d Rifle Divisions were in direct proximity to it, and the 5th Division was in camp (30-35 km from the frontier).

In the second half of June, under the pretext of moving up to the field camp, the 23d Rifle Division from Dvinsk was concentrated in the Kovno area.

In June, on the 18th-20th, the commanders of the border units turned to the army staff with a request for help in combating saboteurs penetrating into Lithuanian territory. In line with this, a decision was taken under the guise of divisional tactical exercises for the divisions to occupy the defenses in their areas and to issue the men ammunition which, however, the district commander ordered to be taken back and turned over to the divisional dumps.

Thus, by 20 June, three rifle divisions had occupied their defenses with the task of firmly holding the occupied lines in the event of an enemy attack.

16 May 1952

**Col S.M. Firsov** (former chief of engineer troops of the 11th Army). On 20 June, the chiefs of the army sections and directorates were assembled by the chief of staff, Maj I.P. Shlemin, who announced that during the night they would move up to the command post. We were warned that this measure was to be carried out for training purposes.

The engineer units were not permitted to be put on alert. Nevertheless, the command was not against mining sections of the state frontier under the condition that I would be responsible for these actions. I set to work. However, on the following day I was summoned to the army chief of staff where I was acquainted with a telegram from the district. "The district commander," it pointed out, "draws attention of the commander of the 11th Army to the unauthorized actions by the army chief of engineer troops, Lt Col Firsov, and expressed in removing two combat engineer battalions from the defensive works and giving them the task of mining the

frontier. The district commander reprimands Lt Col Firsov and orders the battalions to return and not work on mining."

8 October 1955

**Col Gen M.S. Shumilov** (former commander of the XI Rifle Corps of the 8th Army). The corps troops began occupying the defenses upon the order of the army commander from 18 June. I issued orders solely to the commander of the 125th Rifle Division and to the corps units. Other formations also received verbal orders through the army liaison officers. The corps staff was informed of this. It was ordered that ammunition not be issued. It was merely permitted to improve the engineer organization of the defenses. However, on 20 June, recognizing the pending danger, I ordered that cartridges and shells be issued to the subunits and mining start on individual sectors.

On 21 June, a member of the district military council (Corps Commissar P.A. Dibrov.—V.K.) was at the corps staff and through the chief of staff he ordered the ammunition to be collected. I requested a written order on this question from the army staff but did not receive any reply.

1952

**Maj Gen I.I. Fadeyev** (former commander of the 10th Rifle Division of the 8th Army). On 19 June 1941, orders were received from the commander of the X Rifle Corps, Maj Gen I.F. Nikolayev, to alert the division. All the units were immediately moved up to the defensive areas, they occupied the DZOT and artillery firing positions. At dawn, the commanders of the regiments, battalions and companies in the field clarified the battle tasks according to the previously elaborated plan and issued these to the platoon and squad commanders.

In the aims of concealing the measures being carried out on the frontier, ordinary defensive work was carried out and a portion of the personnel was concealed inside the defensive structures, in being in full combat readiness.

8 April 1953

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The former commanders and chiefs of the Western Special Military District (ZapOVO) also replied to the second question.

**Lt Gen Engr Troops P.M. Vasilyev** (former chief of the engineer directorate of the ZapOVO). All the combat engineer battalions of the rifle corps and divisions were engaged on defensive work on the new state frontier. Only the training subunits, the pontoon regiments, the combat engineer battalions of the VI Mechanized Corps, the antitank brigades and the airborne corps were engaged in combat training.

25 May 1953

**Maj Gen B.A. Fomin** (former deputy chief of the Operations Section of the ZapOVO Staff). The divisions began moving into the border areas on foot in April-May 1941. The artillery on mechanized traction and the emergency reserve dumps were moved by rail. The following formations were also moved: the 85th Rifle Division into areas to the west of Grodno, the XXI Rifle Corps from Vitebsk to the northwest and west of Lida, the 49th and 113th Rifle Divisions to the west of the Belovezh Forest, the 75th from Mozyr to the region of Malorita, the 42d from Bereza-Kartuzskaya to Brest and the north.

In mid-June, the headquarters of the XLVII Rifle Corps was ordered by 21-23 June to move up along the railroad to the area of Obuz-Lesna. At the same time, the 55th (Slutsk), 121st (Bobruysk) and 143d (Gomel) Rifle Divisions by a combined march were also to move there while the 50th Rifle Division was to move from Vitebsk to the Taynovka area.

Before the start of hostilities, the troops were prohibited from occupying the defenses in their zones along the state frontier.

By the start of the enemy air strikes (at 0350 hours on 22 June) and the artillery softening up (0400 hours on 22 June), the following units had been able to deploy and occupy the defenses of the state frontier: in the 3d Army the headquarters of the IV Rifle Corps, the 27th and 56th Rifle Divisions; in the 10th Army the headquarters of the I and V Rifle Corps, the 2d, 8th, 13th and 86th Rifle Divisions; in the 4th Army the 6th and 75th Rifle Divisions. Coming under attack in the process of moving up were the 85th Rifle Division in the 3d Army and the 42d Rifle Division in the 4th.

5 June 1952

**Maj Gen P.I. Lyapin** (former chief of staff of the 10th Army). Judging from the fact that several days prior to the start of the war, the district staff had begun to organize a command post, the commander of the ZapOVO had some idea as to the time of the possible start of the war. However, for some reason he did not demand any actions from us.

Under these conditions we were able independently to prepare only two field command posts (in the forest, 18 km to the west of Belostok between Zhednya and Valily Stations) as well as move the staffs of the rifle corps: the I to Vizma and the V to Zambrov.

On the state frontier in the army's zone there were up to 70,000 battalions numbering 40,000 men engaged in defensive work. Scattered along a 150-mile front and to a great depth, poorly or completely unarmed, they could not represent a real force for defending the state frontier. On the contrary, the personnel of the construction, combat engineer and rifle battalions, in the first enemy air strikes, without having weapons and artillery support, began to retreat to the east, sowing panic in the rear.

And what response could there have been, for example, among the personnel of the 25th and 31st Tank Divisions of the XIII Mechanized Corps which by the start of the war each had several training tanks, up to 7,000 men in each, and completely unarmed? This should be clear to anyone.

(No date of signing memoirs.—V.K.)

**Lt Gen G.V. Revunenkov** (former chief of staff of the 37th Rifle Division of the 3d Army). On 17 June 1941, the commander of the I Rifle Corps, Maj Gen F.D. Rubtsov and the divisional commander, Col A.Ye. Chekharin and myself were summoned to the district staff. We were informed that the 37th Rifle Division was to leave for the field camp at Lida, although it was clear that the move was to be made as part of the deployment plan for troops on the state frontier. We were instructed to take everything with us required for life in the camp.

Two regiments left Lepal on foot, while units of the Vitebsk Garrison were dispatched by rail. The trains were organized according to the principle of the convenience of transport and for this reason the divisional staff traveled without a signals battalion while ammunition was in the last train.

We learned about the outbreak of war at 1200 hours on 22 June at Bogdanuv Station from the speech of V.M. Molotov. At that time, the division's units were still continuing on their way, there was no contact between them and neither the commander nor the staff knew the situation.

25 February 1953

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Answering the given question as follows were the former commanders and chiefs of the Kiev Special Military District (KOVO).

**Army Gen M.A. Purkayev** (former chief of staff of the KOVO). On 13 or 14 June, I made a proposal to move the rifle divisions up to the line of the Vladimir-Volynskiy Fortified Area which did not have weapons in the defensive structures. The district military council adopted these ideas and issued the appropriate instructions to the commander of the 5th Army.

However, the next morning, Col Gen M.P. Kirponos in the presence of the military council member accused me of wanting to provoke a war. Immediately from the office I phoned the chief of the General Staff and reported on the decision taken. V.K. Zhukov ordered the troops to be moved up to the line of the fortified area, observing camouflage measures.

29 April 1952

**Army Gen I.Kh. Bagramyan** (former chief of the operations section of the KOVO Staff). The cover troops were positioned directly along the frontier and began

deploying with the outbreak of military operations. The General Staff had prohibited their early moving up to the prepared positions.

The operational reserves moved up from their positions: the rifle corps some 5 days before the war but were unable to reach them; the mechanized corps only on 22 June.

10 September 1952

**Maj Gen N.P. Ivanov** (former chief of staff of the 6th Army). At the moment of the enemy surprise attack, assemblies of artillery troops, machine gunners and combat engineers were underway. Because of this the formations were scattered. A portion of the troops was located in camps while supplies of weapons and materiel were located at their permanent positions.

The cover units, upon order of the KOVO commander, were prohibited from moving up toward the frontier.

1 December 1949

**Lt Gen D.I. Ryabyshev** (former commander of the VIII Mechanized Corps). In the second half of June, we received orders from the KOVO commander to conduct reconnaissance on the roads and bridges from our positions to the state frontier. This was completed by the end of 21 June. On the way back I stopped off at the staff of the 26th Army where I reported to the chief of staff on the situation on the frontier and voiced the opinion of a possibly soon enemy offensive. Col I.S. Varennikov rejected my proposal and assured me that we would be promptly warned in the event of an exacerbation of the situation.

1953

**Maj Gen A.M. Baranov** (former chief of staff of the XVII Rifle Corps). The moving up of the units to the state frontier commenced in the first half of June under the guise of carrying out mobile camps. The latter were located deep in the defensive sectors. The subunits were located in tents and exercises were carried out according to the plan. At the same time, the defensive positions were improved in engineer terms. The ammunition was prepared for issuing to the personnel.

28 October 1955

**Maj Gen F.N. Smekhotvorov** (former commander of the 135th Rifle Division of the 5th Army). On 18 June 1941, the 135th Rifle Division moved out of its permanent position (Ostrog, Dubno, Kremenets) and by the end of 22 June had arrived in Kivertsy (10-12 km to the northeast of Lutsk) in the aim of conducting a camp assembly according to the orders of the army commander.

Before the start of military operations orders were not received on bringing the formation's units to an alert and when in the morning of 22 June the division came under machine gun fire from the air on the march, from the

army staff instructions were received: "Do not play into the hands of provocation, do not fire at the aircraft."

The orders to bring the units to alert and on executing the mobilization plan were issued only in the morning of 23 June, when they were in Kivertsy....

7 March 1953

**Col N.L. Loginov** (former commander of the 135th Rifle Division of the 6th Army). The division was stationed in Chertkov and in the surrounding population points. By the start of the war, four rifle battalions and two artillery battalions were engaged in defensive construction some 20-25 km to the southwest of Chernovtsy, a combat engineer battalion of the division and a company of the regiments were 20-25 km to the northwest of Lvov, while one rifle battalion was defending the district facilities at Ternopol.

In the morning of 17 June, I received a coded telegram from the commander of the XXXVII Rifle Corps: "For conducting corps exercises, the division is to be concentrated in the area of Peremyshlyany and for this from the morning of 18 July follow the route: Chertkov, Buchach, Gadich, Togatyn." To my request of assembling the division's subunits and units for carrying out this task, he replied: "Go to the exercise with the available personnel, you are not permitted to take the battalions from the work and security."

Thus, the division consisting of four rifle battalions, three artillery battalions and special subunits entered the exercise area.

18 May 1957

**Maj Gen P.J. Abramidze** (former commander of the 72d Mountain Rifle Division of the 26th Army). Two rifle regiments (187th and 14th Rifle Regiments) from the division had been located close to the state frontier since August 1940.

On 20 June 1941, I received the following coded message from the General Staff: "All the subunits and units of your formation positioned along the frontier itself are to be moved back several kilometers, that is, to the line of the prepared positions. Do not respond to any provocations from the Germans until they have crossed the state frontier. All the division's units should be on alert. Report execution by 2400 hours on 21 June 1941."

At precisely the designated time, I telegraphed the fulfillment of the order. Present at the report was the Commander of the 26th Army, Lt Gen F.Ya. Kostenko, who had been instructed to verify execution. It is hard to say for what reasons permission was not given to occupy the defensive positions, but the enemy made use of this at the outset of hostilities.

The remaining units and special subunits of the formation began to move up to covering the state frontier with the receiving of the signal to open the package with the mobilization plan.

11 June 1953

**Col P.A. Novichkov** [in VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL (No 3, 1989) on p 67 "Novikov" has been printed in error] (former chief of staff of the 62d Rifle Division of the 5th Army). The division's units, on the basis of the orders of the army staff, during the night of 16-17 June, moved out of the camp at Kivertsy. Having made two nighttime moves, by the morning of 18 June they had reached the defensive zone. However, they did not occupy the defensive line, but rather concentrated in the forests and population points close to it. These actions were undertaken under the guise of moving to a new position. Here they began to organize combat training.

June 19 was spent with the unit commander in reconnoitering the defensive sectors, but all of this was done uncertainly, and we did not feel that a war would begin soon. We did not believe that we were going to fight and took everything that was unnecessary for combat. As a result we overloaded our motor vehicle and horse-drawn transport with surplus equipment.

(No date of signing memoirs.—V.K.)

**Maj Gen S.F. Gorokhov** (former chief of staff of the 99th Rifle Division of the 26th Army). Prior to the start of hostilities, orders were not received for the units to move up to the defensive sections. Only the artillery regiments, upon the order of the commander of the VIII Rifle Corps, Maj Gen M.G. Snegov, were moved up into the forests near the planned firing positions. At the moment of the start of hostilities, he issued contradictory orders: the rifle regiments were to occupy the defensive lines while the artillery ones would not open fire without a special order. Regardless of our urgent demands, permission was not given to use the artillery until 1000 hours on 22 June.

16 March 1953

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The memoirs of the veterans and an analysis of other archival documents indicate that the commanders and chiefs at their own fear and risk undertook measures to repulse the approaching danger. However, hanging over everyone were the words "Don't provoke a war." Thus, the commander of the 8th Army on 20 June 1941 demanded of the commanders of the X and XI Rifle Corps: "1. Let me reaffirm that the battle structures in the zone of the forward security area are not to be occupied by the units. The subunits are to keep behind the structures in combat readiness, in carrying out work to reinforce the defenses.

"2. Timber obstructions are to be made in such a manner that they cannot be noticed from the frontier."<sup>1</sup>

The Directive of the Political Propaganda Directorate of the PribOVO of 21 June stated: "The situation requires complete combat readiness of the units. In every possible way strengthen explanations to the personnel of the



complexity of the international situation which is fraught with all sorts of eventualities....

"The political propaganda sections of the corps and divisions are not to be given written directives in the unit. The tasks of political work are to be given verbally through our own representatives."<sup>2</sup>

The fear of responsibility became ever greater. The political report of the 11th Army, for example, pointed out: "Instead of accelerating the concentration of the army units in the defensive regions, the district staff issued instructions to carry out normal training in the camps and even in the evening of 21 June the cartridges were taken away from the Red Armymen. In such a situation of political disorientation (the statement of TASS of 14 June.—V.K.), of laxness and mobilizational unpreparedness, the army units encountered the superior enemy forces unleashed against them."<sup>3</sup>

The lack of clarity and at times the indecisiveness of these and similar instructions caused perplexity in the army command. For example, the Commander of the 12th Army, Maj Gen P.G. Ponedelin, in trying to obtain an explanation on a question of interest to him, on 19 June questioned the Chief of Staff of the KOVO, Lt Gen M.A. Purkeyev: "The fire," he pointed out, "of antiaircraft weapons can be opened up only on general grounds with a point air defense system upon special orders of the district military council. Please explain as this is incomprehensible."<sup>4</sup>

Why did this happen? In order to answer this question, we must clearly examine at least a portion of the documents deriving from the General Staff of the USSR Armed Forces. On 10 June, for example, the Chief of the General Staff, Army Gen G.K. Zhukov, sent the following telegram to the commander of the KOVO, Col Gen M.P. Kirponos: "The Chief of the Ukrainian NKVD [People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs] Border Troops, Gen Khomenko, has reported that the chiefs of the fortified areas received instructions to occupy the forward security area. Report to the people's commissar of defense on what grounds the units of the KOVO fortified areas received orders to occupy the forward security area. Such actions can immediately provoke the Germans to an armed clash and are fraught with all sorts of consequences. Such an order is to be immediately canceled and report who specifically issued such an arbitrary order."<sup>5</sup>

On 11 June, the commanders of the other Western border military districts received strict instructions: "The zone of the forward security area is not to be occupied by the field and fortified area units without specific orders for this."<sup>6</sup>

On 18 June, the commander of the PribOVO issued orders to bring the air defense system to combat readiness:

"The commander has ordered:

"1. The air defense units of the zones, the VNOS [air warning] battalions and the air defense weapons of the

troop formations and units are to be in alert status No. 2 (increased combat readiness)...

"3. The air defense units which are in the camps, including the troop units, are immediately to return to their permanent positions...

"6. The time of readiness 1800 hours on 19 June 1941. Execution is to be reported on 2000 hours on 19 June 1941.

"Chief of Staff of the PribOVO, Lt Gen Klenov."<sup>7</sup>

On 21 June, the commander received the following instructions: "You without approval from the people's commissar issued orders to the air defense to put in effect status No. 2 and this would mean to introduce blackout conditions in the Baltic thereby causing harm to industry. Such actions can be carried out only upon a government decision. At present, your orders are causing various interpretations and are making the public nervous.

"I demand immediate cancellation of the illegally issued order and an explanation given for a report to the people's commander.

"Chief of Red Army General Staff,  
Army Gen Zhukov."<sup>8</sup>

Clearly in order to understand the involved situation, it is essential to turn to the previously unpublished text of the comments of MSU G.K. Zhukov. "Here, of course, it is essential to bear in mind," the famous general said in 1966, "the categorical demand and the categorical view of Stalin. He firmly said that if we did not provoke the Germans into war there would be no war and we would avoid it. We had the means to avoid it. He did not say just what these means were.... But Stalin set such a view.... And when the question was raised of whether at least the cover echelon should be moved up and which according to the plan should be deployed on the frontier, Stalin said: 'Wait a bit.' He knew that the Kiev District had commenced deployment.... Timoshenko had begun to move certain things, regardless of the strict instructions. Beriya immediately turned to Stalin and said: 'There you are, the military are not carrying out orders and are provoking war....'

"Stalin immediately phoned Timoshenko and gave him a dressing down. This attack also reached me. What are you looking at? Immediately call Kirponos, immediately pull back, punish the guilty ones and so forth. I, of course, was not slow here. But things were moving on. The other commanders would not take the risk now. Give an order and then...but who would give the order? Who wanted to sacrifice his head? Let us assume that I, Zhukov, in being aware of the danger hanging over the nation, would give the order to deploy. This would be reported to Stalin. On what grounds? On the grounds of fear. Well then, Beriya, you can have him for your cellar."<sup>9</sup>



However, regardless of all the prohibitions, preparations to rebuff the aggressor were carried out by the staffs of all levels at risk and peril but in such a way as not to provide Nazi Germany with a direct pretext for initiating a war. Each decision to move up the troops according to the cover plan was carefully weighed. In line with the exacerbation of the overall situation, the Communist Party and the Soviet government from the end of April 1941 took emergency measures to increase the combat readiness of the Armed Forces. Major mobilization measures were carried out unbeknownst by the enemy.

In May and the beginning of June, orders were given to call up around 800,000 reservists. On 13 May, the General Staff issued orders to move from the interior districts into the Western border ones some 28 rifle divisions and 4 army headquarters (of the 16th, 19th, 21st and 22d Armies). Two armies were to be included in the KOVO and two in the ZapOVO. Moreover, the headquarters of the 13th Army was to be constituted in Mogilev.

Did the Nazi Command know about the Soviet troop grouping in the Western border military districts and about the measures being carried out? The answer to this can be seen from the Intelligence Summary No. 5 of 13 June 1941 (see the document).

An analysis of the intelligence summary indicates that the intelligence bodies of Nazi Germany and its Allies had an extensive agent network in the territory of the Western border districts. As a whole, the Wehrmacht Military Command possessed complete data on the state and regroupings of Soviet troops prior to the war. However, it must be pointed out that certain information of Nazi intelligence was unreliable. In the summary the High Command, for example, was misinformed on the motorized rifle divisions and tank (motor mechanized) brigades in the Soviet districts. The reason for the error was clearly the mass and incomplete formation of the mechanized corps which was carried out basically on the basis of cavalry formations. Due to the lack of the prescribed materiel in the motorized and tank divisions, Nazi intelligence was not able to understand what the true situation was and often had the wrong numbering of the Soviet formations. Thus, its agents mention in the summary about the presence of the XI Tank Corps in the Odessa Military District. In actuality, the XI Mechanized Corps was located in the zone of the ZapOVO. The II Tank Corps was also not in the Baltic. The XII Mechanized Corps was there and so forth.

The future enemy also overstated the total number of Soviet formations in the Western border military districts. It is generally known that in them by the start of the war there were 170 divisions and 2 brigades.<sup>10</sup>

The published document also repudiates the legend disseminated now in the West of the "preventive war" by Germany against the USSR and conceived even by Gobbels system. In the statements turned over to the Soviet government by the German ambassador after the invasion of Nazi troops of our land, the Nazi leaders

asserted that the USSR had supposedly not carried out its obligations under the Soviet-German Pact and was preparing to attack Germany. For this reason, the statement points out, Germany was forced to commence a war against the Soviet Union in order to anticipate a Soviet offensive. But in the conclusions of the top secret intelligence summary it states: "Basically, as before, defensive actions (by the Russians.—V.K.) are expected."

High Command of Ground Forces,  
General Staff, Headquarters of  
4th Quartermaster, Section for  
Studying Foreign Armies East (II)  
No 46/41, Top Secret  
Superior Command

Headquarters  
13 June 1941

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#### Intelligence Summary No. 5

1. The enemy situation maps as of 11 June 1941 will be sent out on 13 June 1941 by the Section for Studying Foreign Armies East of the General Staff of the Ground Forces for No. 2465/41, Secret.

2. After 20 May, the following changes basically occurred:

The total size of the Red Army in the European USSR was increased by 5 rifle divisions, 2 tank divisions and 1 tank (motor mechanized) brigade and is: 150 rifle divisions, 25.5 cavalry, 7 tank divisions and 38 tank brigades (motor mechanized).

a) In front of the Southern Front, there has been a regrouping of units and formations stationed in Southern Bessarabia and their number has been increased by 1 tank division and 1 tank (motor mechanized) brigade. One is struck by the fact that the units located here are virtually all mobile and thus a strong mobile grouping has been created consisting of: 4 motorized rifle divisions, 1 cavalry division, 2 tank divisions and 5 tank (motor mechanized) brigades.

This grouping could also be envisaged for carrying out offensive tasks. This is indicated by the preparation of crossing equipment for the Prut River. According to Romanian information, in recent days the forces have been moved up closer to the frontier, and in particular: the 154th Motorized Rifle Division is positioned in the area to the northeast of Artsiz. Its place has been taken by one motorized rifle division of unestablished numbering from the interior oblasts of Russia. The 49th Tank (Motor Mechanized) Brigade has moved from Artsiz to Kongaz and has probably been included, along with 1 brigade in Tarutino, in the XI Tank Corps. The 9th Cavalry Division has been shifted to the frontier, the 95th Motorized Rifle Division to the area to the north of Kishinev and its place has been taken by a new rifle division. The 15th Motorized Rifle Division is in Kalarazi and its place in Henseshti has been taken by a tank division. Recently the 21st Motorized Rifle Division has been shifted from around Kiev.

The troops of the KOVO have been increased by 3 rifle divisions and 1 cavalry division. Evidently in Bukovina there has only been the redeployment of units and formations. The 36th Tank Brigade has been shifted to Falesti while the 76th (176?) Rifle Division has departed from the border zone. Whether the 98th Division remains or it has been replaced by another division is under question. The 7th Rifle Division has probably replaced the rifle division in the area of Edintsy.

In Northern Bukovina, in the area to the south of Chernovtsy—Kamenets-Podolskiy—Chertkov, a strong mobile group has been formed consisting of 2 motorized rifle divisions, 3 cavalry divisions and 2 tank (motor mechanized) brigades, and it includes: the tank corps in Chernovtsy (the 81st Motorized Rifle Division, the 28th Cavalry Division, 2 tank brigades and 1 airborne regiment?).

Possibly the cavalry formations stationed in Northern Bukovina together with the 9th Motorized Rifle Division have formed a separate cavalry corps. This mobile group can be employed for carrying out offensive tasks with a limited aim in the southern sector.

To the southeast of Kolomyia, the 24th Rifle Division (which up to now was stationed to the south of Minsk) has reappeared and also to the south of Stanislav the 28th Mountain Rifle Division from the Northern Caucasus has appeared; together with the 47th and 96th Mountain Rifle Division, possibly, these units are subordinate to a mountain-rifle corps in Bolekhov.

The grouping of forces around Lvov remains basically unchanged. The 26th Tank Brigade has moved to the area to the east of Pshemysl while the 138th Rifle Division has reappeared near Lvov. The mobile formations located around Lvov are evidently subordinate to the XI Cavalry Corps in Lvov.

Recently established was the appearance in Ostrog of the 135th Rifle Division from the reserve group around Rovno and together with the newly arrived 124th Rifle Division and the 17th Motorized Rifle Division which has also arrived from an area to the south of Baranovichi, are subordinate to the XXVII Corps. There is no information on the disposition of the 44th and 131st Rifle Divisions.

b) Ahead of the center of the Eastern Front (Pripyat—Grodno) there has been an insignificant regrouping of forces and the Russian troops have increased slightly (by 1 cavalry division and 1 tank division).

To the south of Minsk, a new weak reserve group has been formed consisting of the 5th Rifle Division at Ivanovo and the 75th Rifle Division to the east of Slutsk and, probably, is subordinate to the staff of the XXVIII Corps.

Arriving in the 4th Army is the 24th Division stationed to the east of Minsk, and the 17th Motorized Rifle Division has been established to the south of Baranovichi.

In the area to the south of Ostrolenka, a new rifle division of unestablished numbering has appeared. Thus, the grouping of forces in Belorussia has not changed substantially. Near Belostok a tank corps has been constituted consisting of the 9th Tank Division and, probably, the 1st and 7th Cavalry Divisions. The latter moved here from Latvia. The 48th Rifle Division has been established in Riga.

c) Ahead of the Northern Front (the Baltic nations), the Russian grouping has been increased by 4 rifle divisions, but 2 cavalry divisions have left. The battle formations in the border zone have been strengthened by 1 rifle division in the area of the Suvalki Salient and 1 to the east of Memel.

There is no certainty as to the location of the XXIX Corps. It has merely been established that the corps staff with corps units have moved to the Varena area. It is not to be excluded that both divisions of the corps have been broken up and their units and subunits transferred to other formations.

The II and III Tank Corps have been moved up to the Memel arc to the south of Kaunas. However, up to now it has not been established whether tank divisions of the III Tank Corps were also moved up into this area.

A tactical reserve group has been formed around and to the north of Telziy and this consists of 2 rifle divisions and 2 or 3 tank brigades.

For a long time there has been no new information on the cavalry group located in the Panevezhis area, so it can be assumed that it has been broken up. The 7th Cavalry Division recently appeared near Belostok, the 36th Cavalry Division, possibly, has moved to Kandalaksha. The 48th Rifle Division (see Point b) has newly arrived here but the 181st Rifle Division has left for the eastern regions of Latvia.

The Pskov operational mobile reserve grouping (I Tank Corps) has remained unchanged.

d) The Finnish Front.

There has been no pullback of troops from the Finnish Front, although the 75th Rifle Division has departed for Belorussia while the 14th Rifle Division has arrived in the Murmansk area and the 1st Cavalry Division (possibly, the 36th Cavalry Division?) has been detected in the Kandalaksha area. Thus, it is a question merely of the exchange of formations while the total number of troops has been increased by 1 (rifle) division.

e) The 28th Mountain Rifle Division has been removed from the Caucasus Front and transferred to the Bolekhov area.

f) Far East: unchanged.

3. Movements of troops and military supplies on the western sector are continuing. However, nowhere have they established more significant transport traffic. Troop movements serve merely to fill out the formations with

reserve servicemen to the level of a wartime establishment and for training them in the summer camps.

At the beginning of June, movements began from Rostov-na-Donu to the south and it was not possible to establish their purpose. Possibly these were departures for summer camps or for exercises.

The possibility is not excluded that the movements of personnel under the auspices of Osoaviakhim [Society for Assistance to Defense, Aviation and Chemical Construction] to the summer camps and for major exercises (up to 20,000 men) have been reported as troop movement.

#### 4. Induction for military service.

The situation has basically remained unchanged. The Poles from the occupied areas probably will not be called up for military service but will be used as manpower for the construction of fortifications.

#### 5. Preparations for evacuation.

In Bessarabia and Bukovina, preparatory work for evacuation is being continued. It is a question of evacuating above all the supplies and halting traffic over bridges and preparing them for destruction. According to Abwehr reports in Southern Bessarabia, field work has been partially stopped. The departure of officer families from Bukovina is continuing.

Similar measures have been reported from Estonia. The information on the pullback of troops from Libava, Vindau and Ezel up to now have not been confirmed. In the given instance, it was a question of the relieving of the troops.

#### 6. Troop morale.

During exercises and lectures in the troops, the personnel has been prepared for the possibility of a war against Germany. Troop morale in the Baltic countries, regardless of the intense propaganda, has evidently declined sharply. The Baltic national units are viewed as unreliable. The evermore frequently repeated information about the disbanding of the XXIX Corps show the possibility of the distribution of its units to other formations.

According to reports which cannot be verified, the Russian soldiers who distinguished themselves in the war against Finland are supposedly being transferred to troop units without combat experience.

#### 7. Construction.

Intense construction, aside from the areas indicated in the previous intelligence reports, has been noted in the area to the south of Kalvaria and on the Karelian Isthmus. Women have also been involved in building fortifications and roads.

#### 8. Terrain.

In the course of a flight along the route of Moscow—Königsberg, the military attache observed that on this route the terrain is largely still very wet. All the rivers, even the small ones, have greatly overflowed their banks.

Along the entire route, one could see numerous ponds and pools without a transition from one river basin to another. Such a large amount of water is a result of this year's late spring.

#### 9. Russian leadership.

a) Rumors stubbornly persist that as a result of the erroneous assessment of the combat strength of the Yugoslav Army, Timoshenko's positions have supposedly been greatly shaken. One is struck by the fact that recently Timoshenko has not been mentioned anywhere in the press. However, it must not be assumed that Stalin at present would allow himself to lose such an individual so essential for the organizational development of the Red Army.

b) According to Abwehr data, Shaposhnikov is to be appointed the army commander in the Southwest (Southwestern Front, army group) with a staff in Zhitomir?

#### Conclusions:

One notes a further strengthening of the Russian troops located in the Western border regions by 5 rifle divisions, 2 cavalry divisions, 1 tank (motor mechanized) brigade, totaling up to: 150 rifle divisions, 25.5 cavalry divisions, 7 tank divisions and 38 tank brigades (motor mechanized brigades).

Within the individual troop groups, there have been regroupings related to the exchange of formations. The strong mobile groups in Southern Bessarabia and in the Chernovtsy area directly on the frontier, in line with information on the further moving up to the Lower Prut and preparations of crossing equipment, make it possible to conclude the possibility of local offensive strikes by the Russians. There has been a further consolidating of forces in Lithuania. But basically, as before, defensive actions can be expected.

#### Footnotes

1. TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 344, inv. 5564, file 10, sheet 36.
2. Ibid., file 1, sheet 47.
3. Ibid., folio 221, inv. 1362, file 11, sheets 34-35.
4. Ibid., folio 229, inv. 164, file 1, sheet 20.
5. Ibid., folio 251, inv. 1554, file 4, sheet 425.
6. Ibid., sheets 431, 432.
7. Ibid., folio 344, inv. 5564, file 1, sheet 14.
8. Ibid., folio 251, inv. 1554, file 4, sheet 437.
9. KOMMUNIST, No 14, 1988, p 99.
10. For the effective strength of the Western border military districts, see VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, Nos 7, 8 and 11, 1988; No 4, 1989.

(To be continued)

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**Soviet Pre-WWII Foreign Policy Assessed**  
*00010013d VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL*  
*in Russian No 5, May 89 (signed to press 6 May 89)*  
*pp 33-37*

[Article, published under the heading "Viewpoints, Judgments, Versions," by Army Gen A.M. Mayorov: "On the Threshold of the War"]

[Text] The international events in Europe during the prewar period had a large impact upon the subsequent course and outcome of World War II. Interest in them has remained enormous throughout the world. Without a careful and objective analysis of them, it is difficult to completely disclose the reasons for the outbreak of the worldwide conflagration which cost all mankind very dearly. The 1930s were full of very complex political events with the world being on the brink of war. Any of the constantly exploding military conflicts in the various regions of Europe and Asia could lead to this. The disturbers of the peace in Europe were primarily German Naziism and Italian Fascism and in the Far East and Asia, Japanese militarism and their aggressive appetites grew literally day by day.

An analysis of the numerous foreign policy documents of those times shows that the ruling circles of France, England and Poland, with American approval, over a number of years rejected all the constructive proposals by the Soviet government to thwart the growing aggression and made an enormous effort to deflect from themselves and direct to the East the aggressive aspirations of Nazi Germany. The socialist country was proposed to Naziism as an object of attack and this country had never evoked sympathy in Germany and was viewed as the chief goal of conquest. Our government did not foster any particular illusions about this. It was firmly convinced that sooner or later the brunt of Nazi aggression would be directly against the USSR.

It is completely natural that the Soviet leaders, in being concerned with the security of the nation, made definite adjustments in Soviet foreign policy. It was essential to break the constricting ring of political isolation in order not to remain alone against all the capitalist states, as had been the case during the years of the Civil War and intervention.

On 24 August 1988, KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA under the title "At the Threshold of the War" published a conversation between the newspaper correspondent A. Novikov and Doctor of Historical Sciences and the veteran of the Great Patriotic War, V.M. Kulish.

Unfortunately, the questions of the journalist as well as the replies of V.M. Kulish did not disclose and did not provide an objective assessment of the activities of I.V. Stalin and the Soviet government in the prewar period. Possibly, the urge for sensationalism did not make it possible to A. Novikov and V.M. Kulish to take an objective and unbiased approach to assessing the foreign policy activities of the USSR in the prewar period and show historical truth.

The article in KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA, in our view, has a subjective nature. Inevitably its content leads the readers to the notion that I.V. Stalin and all foreign policy activity by the Soviet government pushed Nazi Germany into unleashing World War II, that a system of collective security was not created in Europe due to the fault of the USSR and not as a result of the criminal policy carried out by the capitalist states of encouraging Naziism.

In the conversation it is asserted that the leaders of the Communist Party and the Soviet government underestimated the danger of German Naziism, its military threat to the Soviet Union as well as to the Western nations, and for this reason endeavored to maintain a policy of a rapprochement primarily with Nazi Germany. The confirmation of this is the statement of I.V. Stalin at the 17th Party Congress: "...We are far from rejoicing in the Nazi regime in Germany. But here the issue is not one of Naziism, because Fascism, for example in Italy, has not provided the USSR establishing the best relations with this country."<sup>1</sup> Well and good, only one cannot understand for what reason the view is quoted selectively and other provisions of the report are not mentioned. Certainly the party Central Committee in describing German Naziism, emphasized that the latter is incorrectly called National Socialism, "for with the closest examination it is impossible to discover even an atom of socialism in it."<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, the changes are pointed out which had occurred in German policy with the coming to power of the Nazis and it is pointed out that they reflect the growth of the revanchist and imperialist attitudes and that in the policy of this nation the upper hand has been gained by leaders who are continuing "basically the policy of the former German Kaiser who at one time occupied the Ukraine and undertook a campaign against Leningrad, having turned the Baltic nations into a staging area for such a campaign...." Here V.M. Kulish does not mention the words of Stalin that "we have not had an orientation toward Germany just as we have not had an orientation to Poland and France."<sup>3</sup>

That the Soviet government clearly recognized the danger deriving from Nazi Germany can be seen from the words of the USSR Minister of Foreign Affairs M.M. Litvinov, voiced by him on 23 March 1939 in a statement in meeting with the British Secretary of Foreign Trade R. Hudson: "Even 5 years ago we were aware of the danger to the cause of peace deriving from Nazi aggression. We considered, however, Nazi aggression to be a common danger and for fighting against it common efforts and collaboration would be required by all non-aggressive countries."<sup>4</sup>

Unfortunately, one can still encounter not only in foreign but also the Soviet press attempts without sufficient grounds to cast doubt upon and sometimes completely obstruct the various foreign policy steps of Soviet diplomacy. A number of historians and writers in individual unimportant articles but sometimes even in toasts at official meetings draw far-reaching conclusions about Soviet foreign policy. But certainly it is perfectly obvious that the best confirmation of the correctness of Soviet

foreign policy in the prewar period is the fact that the temporary rapprochement with Nazi Germany ultimately did not lead to a military alliance with it but with Germany's enemies.

Undoubtedly the policy of rapprochement with any fascist state ultimately contradicted our principles and the Soviet government was compelled to turn to it after its efforts to establish a coalition with the nonaggressive states had been stalemated and it was convinced that nothing more could be expected and to appeal to the reasonableness of the leaders of England, France, Poland and the other Western countries was useless.

The Soviet-German Nonaggression Treaty of 23 August 1939, the liberation campaigns of 1939-1940 by the Soviet troops in the aims of providing aid to the peoples of the Western Ukraine, Western Belorussia, Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina which had been violently separated from Soviet Russia during the years of the Civil War in their struggle to restore Soviet power and seek annexation by the USSR, the concern for the security of Leningrad, the restoring of Soviet power in the Baltic states and their voluntary entry into the USSR, as well as the Neutrality Pact with Japan significantly strengthened the political and military-strategic positions of the Soviet Union and brought it out of a state of political isolation.

Moreover, by the time of the concluding of the Soviet-German Nonaggression Pact, similar treaties with Nazi Germany had already been concluded by England and France. As for Poland, initially it tried to put together a bloc hostile to the Soviet Union and consisting of Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Greece, Finland, Latvia and Estonia and then began to court Germany, refusing to face its eastern neighbor. At present, it has become widely known that, in planning to attack Poland, Germany most feared the Soviet Union and not England and France. For precisely this reason the Nazi leaders hurried to conclude a nonaggression pact with the USSR. The mistakenness if not the criminalness of the foreign policy of the Polish leaders has been pointed out also by certain clear-thinking bourgeois researchers. "The only chance to avoid war," wrote the English historian B. Liddell-Hart on the situation in the summer of 1939, "was now to enlist the support of Russia, the only country which could provide Poland with direct aid and serve as a restraining force for Hitler. However,...the English government showed evasiveness and insincerity.... A fatal role was also played by the arguments of the governments of Poland and other small countries against help from Russia."

In formulating the questions of V.M. Kulish, the correspondent by a tendentious selection of quotes from the speeches and toasts of the leaders of the Soviet government concerning the Soviet-German Nonaggression Pact leads the readers to the conclusion that the USSR set the aggressor free to dismember Poland. For supporting this thesis, they quote the speech by the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars V.M. Molotov on 31 August 1939 at a session of the USSR Supreme Soviet:

"Yesterday the Nazis of Germany were conducting a hostile foreign policy toward the USSR. Yes, yesterday we were enemies in the foreign policy area. Today, however, the situation has changed and we have ceased being enemies."<sup>5</sup> After this the correspondent says: "Several hours later the Germans invaded Poland."

If the correspondent had quoted the head of the Soviet government completely, then he, it seems to us, would have to have interpreted differently the events of the past and the question, in all appearances, would have sounded differently. Incidentally, V.M. Molotov, in assessing the Soviet-German Pact, after the words: "We have ceased to be enemies," said the following: "Political arts in the area of foreign relations consists in not increasing the number of enemies for one's country. On the contrary, political art consists in reducing the number of such enemies and seeing to it that yesterday's enemies become good neighbors who maintain peaceful relations." He also pointed out that "we have stood and do stand for the friendship of the USSR and German peoples, for the development and flourishing of friendship between the peoples of the Soviet Union and the German people."<sup>6</sup>

In addition, it must also be remembered that it was not our fault that the Western countries did not support Poland and did not come to its defense.

At times, the question is posed of who gained more, Stalin or Hitler? Who wrapped whom around his finger? We are firmly convinced that the question cannot be posed in that manner. Yes, Hitler was secure to the East in 1939-1940, in a short period of time he defeated Poland, he turned to the West, finished off France, England was in a difficult situation, while the USSR avoided a war on two fronts and gained almost 2 years to prepare for repelling aggression. There is another question of how these years were used. Moreover, the unleashing of a war by German Nazism in the West caused a whole series of states to look differently at the Soviet Union and to see in it the only state which was capable of opposing German Nazism. This made it possible subsequently in a short period of time to create an anti-Hitler coalition capable of defeating the Nazi bloc countries.

Nevertheless, with all the positive results, of course, it would have been preferable to promptly conclude an Anglo-Franco-Soviet treaty which, possibly, would have made it possible to check the aggressor on the threshold of the war.

It must be remembered that the Soviet government had repeatedly made such proposals both to England and France, but neither of these countries had responded. Thus, on 17 April 1939, the USSR People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs M.M. Litvinov handed the British Ambassador in the USSR W. Seeds a proposal from the Soviet government to conclude between England, France and the Soviet Union an agreement running 5-10 years with a mutual obligation to provide all possible aid, including military, in the event of aggression in Europe



against any of the agreeing states. This proposal on 18 April was also sent to the French government. However, at that time the Soviet proposals were not adopted by the English and the French. But the article in KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA emphasizes that our country due to the repressions at that time was weakened and no state could "risk concluding a treaty on joint actions—all the more in a war—with a knowingly weakened partner." In actuality, the English and French did have such fears. Yes, undoubtedly, the repressions in 1937-1938 significantly weakened not only the military leadership but all the Soviet Armed Forces, the entire nation as a whole, but not to such a degree that the USSR no longer counted. The defeat of the Japanese troops in the Far East for a long time killed the Japanese desire to test the strength of the Soviet Union. Moreover, it is worth recalling that at the Anglo-Franco-Soviet talks of the military missions in August 1939, the Soviet delegation proposed a detailed plan according to which we would be willing to field 136 divisions, 9,000-10,000 tanks and 5,000-5,500 combat aircraft against an aggressor in Europe, and this certainly does not bespeak the weakness of our country.<sup>7</sup>

The Soviet political and military leadership, in constantly recognizing the inevitability of war against Nazi Germany, after the conclusion of the Soviet-German Pact used the time gained for carrying out a whole series of emergency measures to ready the nation to repel Nazi aggression. The Plenum of the VKP(b) [All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik)] Central Committee held in March 1940, having carefully analyzed the lessons of the Soviet-Finnish War and the experience of the commenced World War II, disclosed major shortcomings in the organizational development and training of the Soviet Armed Forces and outlined the ways for eliminating them. On the basis of the decisions of the Central Committee Plenum, an extensive program was worked out for the reorganization and rearming of the Army and the readying of the nation for war. All the subsequent party and government decisions were subordinate to carrying out this program.

The primary problems in preparing the nation and the Armed Forces were the following: the restructuring of the economy to ensure expanded production of combat equipment and weapons; the equipping of the Western Theater of Operations; the revising of the strategic deployment plans; the carrying out of the difficult tasks related to the reorganization and rearming of the army considering the last demands.

In 1938-1940, the annual output of defense industry products rose by an average of 39 percent, while the increase in the product of all industry was 13 percent. Allocations for military organizational development and the needs of the Armed Forces during the prewar years also rose: in 1939, they were 25.6 percent of the state budget, in 1940, 32.6 percent and in 1941, 43.4 percent.

However, regardless of the enormous effort, it was not possible to fully complete this work. Nevertheless, this

does not provide the right to assert that nothing was done or very little was done to ready the nation for war.

Proceeding from a careful assessment of the military-political and strategic situation, it was assumed that Nazi Germany could act against the USSR in an alliance with Finland, Romania, Hungary, Italy and, possibly, Turkey. In the Far East, militaristic Japan was considered to be a potential enemy and it could act at any advantageous moment.

Thus, the possibility was not to be excluded that the Soviet Union would have to wage war simultaneously on two fronts and if one considered Turkey, on three. However, the main front was the Western one, where Germany with its allies could, according to preliminary estimates, field up to 243 divisions, over 10,000 tanks and 14,000 aircraft against the Soviet Union.

On the Western sector, the plan was to deploy a grouping of Soviet troops consisting of the Northern, North-western, Western and Southwestern Fronts, numbering 189 divisions and 2 brigades, that is, almost 79 percent of all the Red Army formations. In reserve they planned to hold 5 armies or 51 divisions. The basic naval forces consisting of 3 fleets were also aimed against Nazi Germany and its allies.

The General Staff worked out the "1941 Plan for the Defense of the State Frontier" for a period of the strategic deployment of the Armed Forces. The staffs in the border military districts were to work out and submit to the General Staff during the period from 5 through 20 June plans for defending the frontier in terms of the specific conditions. However, it was not possible to promptly review or, even more, work these out in the troops and this was one of the main reasons for the disorganized entry of the troops of the Western border military districts into the war.

Undoubtedly, one can agree that, in carrying out fundamentally correct party and government decisions, Stalin and the persons around him underestimated the direct military danger confronting the country.

Stalin was convinced that Hitler would not open the Eastern Front without having completed the war in the West and he wrongly excluded the willingness of the Fuhrer to take a risk, to show military and political adventurism as well as treachery in the aims of ensuring strategic surprise. This error by Stalin cost the Soviet people very large unjustified losses while Hitler's adventurism brought Nazi Germany to a crushing defeat.

#### Footnotes

1. "XVII syezd Vsesoyuznoy Kommunisticheskoy partii (b). 26 yanvarya—10 fevralya 1934 g." [17th Congress of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik). 26 January-10 February 1934], Verbatim Report, Moscow, Partizdat, 1934, p 13.

2. Ibid., p 11.

3. Ibid., p 14.



4. "SSSR v borbe za mir nakanune vtoroy mirovoy voyny (sentyabr 1938 g.—avgust 1939 g.)" [The USSR in the Struggle for Peace on the Eve of World War II (September 1938-August 1939)], Documents and Materials, Moscow, Politizdat, 1971, p 271.

5. "Vneocherednaya chetvertaya sessiya Verkhovnogo Soveta SSSR. 28 avgusta—1 sentyabra 1939 g." [Extraordinary 4th Session of the USSR Supreme Soviet. 28 August-1 September 1939], Verbatim Report, Moscow, Izd. Verkhovnogo Soveta SSSR, 1939, p 202.

6. Ibid., pp 202-203.

7. "SSSR v borbe za mir...", pp 574, 607.

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### First Days of War in Documents

00010013e VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL  
in Russian No 5, May 89 (signed to press 6 May 89)  
pp 42-56

[Documentary materials, published under the heading "From the Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense," and compiled by the Section Chief of the Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense, Col V.R. Zhuravlev, Capt A.S. Anufriyev and N.M. Yemelyanova, senior science associate at the archives: "The First Days of the War in Documents"]

[Text] Some 48 years ago, early one Sunday morning on 22 June 1941, Nazi Germany attacked the Soviet Union treacherously, without a declaration of war.

Thousands of enemy guns opened fire against the border outposts, fortifications, staffs, communications centers and Soviet troop positions. Major air forces attacked the airfields, navy bases and rail junctions. At the same time, many cities in our nation such as Kiev, Minsk, Smolensk, Sevastopol and others were bombed.

The hostilities spread from the Baltic Sea to the Carpathians (a front of up to 1,500 km). During subsequent days, the front of the enemy strategic offensive broadened and by mid-June reached 3,000 km while the depth of the invasion on the main axes was 400-600 km.

On the first day of the war, the enemy committed 117 divisions and 10 days later, with the entry into battle of formations from the second echelons and the satellite troops, the number of enemy divisions fighting on the first line had increased up to 171.<sup>1</sup> On the Soviet side, in the border zone, only the cover armies of the 5 Western military districts could fight. The enemy surpassed the Soviet troops in forces by 3- or 4-fold on the major sectors.

The start of the war developed extremely unfavorably for the Soviet Army. By the time of the attack by the aggressors, they had not been brought to combat readiness and had not completed their strategic deployment. Our troops were spread out over a front of over 4,500 km and more than 400 km in depth.<sup>2</sup> The Soviet units, in being attacked by surprise, were forced to engage in

battle under extremely disadvantageous conditions for themselves. Many regiments and divisions were caught by surprise, and were in training camps, at firing ranges and compounds. They had to enter into battle unit by unit without the required air and artillery support.

Regardless of such difficult conditions, our troops from the very first hours of the war put up stubborn resistance to the enemy and without considering the sacrifices, fought with unusual tenacity and heroism. However, under the attacks of superior enemy forces, they were forced while heavily engaged to retreat into the interior of the nation.

How can one explain our setbacks at the outset of the war? This question at present, like 48 years ago, is being asked by millions of Soviet people. It is scarcely possible to give a standard reply. We say that one of the main reasons was the fact that the superior military-political leadership erred in assessing the military-strategic situation. This is true but it is not all the truth. We also say that with the obviously increasing threat of attack by Nazi Germany on the Soviet Union, prompt instructions were not issued for the complete strategic deployment and the alerting of the Armed Forces, even in the border districts. This is true. But again the given factors are not enough for an exhaustive reply to the question. Historians must still find the answer to it.

We are beginning publication of documents from the first days of the war. Certain of them were worked out prior to 22 June 1941. We are printing them so that the reader has a clearer notion of the very outset of the war.

### Footnotes

1. "Vtoraya mirovaya voyne 1939-1945 gg.: Voenno-istoricheskiy ocherk" [World War II of 1939-1945: Military History Essay], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1958, p 156.
2. "50 let Vooruzhennykh Sil SSSR" [50 Years of the USSR Armed Forces], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1968, p 252.

### Order of the USSR People's Commissar of Defense

19 June 1941

Up to now nothing substantial has been done to camouflage the airfields and major military facilities. The airfields have still not been planted with grass, the landing strips have not been colored the color of the terrain, the airfield structures in standing out starkly in their bright color attract the attention of an observer over scores of kilometers, the clustered and linear position of the aircraft at the airfield, in the absence of their camouflaging and poor organization of the airfield maintenance center employing giveaway features and signals completely give away the airfields. A modern airfield should merge completely with the surrounding situation and nothing should attract the attention to the airfield from the air. Analogous laxness toward camouflaging is shown by the artillery and motorized units with clustered and linear positioning of their fleets which not only

offers excellent objects of observation but also easy targets for air attack including the tanks, armored vehicles, including the tanks, armored vehicles, the command and other special vehicles; the motor mechanized and other troops are painted colors which provide a vivid reflection and are easily observable not only from the air but also from the ground. Nothing has been done to camouflage the dumps and other military facilities.

I order.

1. By 1 July 1941, to plant all the airfields with grasses the color of the surrounding terrain, the landing strips are to be painted and the entire airfield set-up is to simulate the corresponding surrounding background.

2. Airfield structures to the roofs inclusively are to be painted in a uniform style with the surrounding airfields structures. Gasoline storage tanks are to be buried in the ground and camouflaged with particular care.

3. The linear or clustered positioning of aircraft is categorically prohibited. The dispersion and camouflaging of the aircraft ensures their complete nonobservability.

4. By 5 July 1941, in each air base area [within] the 500-km border zone they are to organize 8-10 dummy airfields and equip each of them with 40 or 50 dummy aircraft.

5. By 1 July 1941, the tanks, armored vehicles, command, special and transport vehicles are to be painted. For camouflaging matt paints are to be employed relating to the terrain of the position and actions. Reflecting paints are categorically prohibited.

6. The districts which are within the threatened zones are to carry out measures for camouflaging the dumps, shops, parking areas and by 15 July 1941 are to ensure their nonobservability from the air.

7. The camouflaging carried out on the airfields, dumps, combat and transport vehicles is to be inspected from the air by the appropriate commanders of the district staffs and by aerial photography.

8. Execution is to be reported on 1 July 1941 and 15 July 1941 via the Chief of the Red Army General Staff.

USSR People's Commissar of Defense, MSU Timoshenko  
Chief of Red Army General Staff, Army Gen Zhukov

TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 334, inv. 5307, file 945, sheet 193. Copy.

**Order of the USSR People's Commissar of Defense No. 1\***

22 June 1941

1. During 22-23 June 1941, it is possible that there will be a surprise attack by the Germans on the fronts of the LVO [Leningrad Military District], PribOVO [Baltic Special Military District], ZapOVO [Western Special

Military District], KOVO [Kiev Special Military District] and ODVO [Odessa Military District]. The German attack may commence by provocative actions.

2. The task of our troops is not to submit to any provocative actions whatsoever which could cause major complications.

At the same time, the troops of the LVO, PribOVO, ZapOVO, KOVO and ODVO are to be in full combat readiness to meet a surprise attack by the Germans or their allies.

3. I order:

a) During the night of 22 June 1941, to secretly occupy the firing points of the fortified areas on the state frontier;

b) Before dawn of 22 June 1941, to disperse all aviation, including the organic, over the field airfields and carefully camouflage it;

c) All units are to be alerted without an additional alerting of the regular personnel. All measures are to be prepared for the blocking out the towns and facilities.

No other measures are to be carried out without special orders.

Timoshenko  
Zhukov

TsAMO, folio 208, inv. 2513, file 71, sheet 69. Original.

\*Received at the staff of the ZapOVO on 22 June 1941 at 0045 hours. Dispatched to the troops on 22 June 1941 at 0225 hours, 0235 hours.

**Report of Commander of 139th Rifle Division to  
Commander of XXXVII Rifle Corps and Commander of  
6th Army of KOVO**

18 June 1941

At work on defensive projects in the area of Vashkoup, Zhadnova, Starozhiney are 3 rifle battalions, 2 artillery battalions, the combat engineer companies of the rifle regiments, 100 carts, 20 motor vehicles. Two rifle battalions and 40 carts are approaching the area of the defensive works. The division's combat engineer battalion is at defensive works in the Lvov area. Two companies are guarding the dumps of Tarnopol. Two battalions are guarding the garrison district and army facilities.

Actually in the camp there is no one to act.

I request permission to remove the division's units from the defensive works and return 2 companies from the guarding of Tarnopol in order to carry out the directive for leaving for the camps.

A delay of 5-6 days is required for this.

I request immediate instructions.

Cmdr of 139 Rifle Div. Loginov  
Chief of Staff of 139 Rifle Div. Karpenko

TsAMO, folio 334, inv. 5307, file 22, sheet 210. Original.

**Order of the Commander of the 6th Army to the  
Commanders of the VI Rifle Corps, the IV and XV  
Mechanized Corps and the 3d Cavalry Division**

20 June 1941

The staffs of the corps, divisions and regiments are to be in the field. They are not to leave their positions. Permission is to be requested for any exercises involving a leaving of the positions.

Battalions are not to be taken off of defensive construction.

Cmdr of 6th Army, Lt Gen Muzychenko

TsAMO, folio 334, inv. 5307, file 22, sheet 186. Original.

**Order of Commander of 6th Army to Commanders of IV  
Mechanized Corps, 8th Tank Division and 81st  
Motorized Rifle Division**

20 June 1941

The antiaircraft battalions are to be immediately summoned from the Lvov Camp to their own formations.

Upon arrival, they are to be given the task of covering the positions of the divisions from the air.

Each antiaircraft battery is to have at the firing position 0.25 units of fire and completely equipped.

Fire is to be opened against foreign aircraft only with permission received from army chief of staff.

For conducting field firing at the Lvov Artillery Range, antiaircraft artillery is to be sent battery by battery according to the plan of the chief of the Lvov Artillery Camp.

Cmdr of 6th Army, Lt Gen Muzychenko

TsAMO, folio 334, inv. 5307, file 22, sheet 197. Original.

**Telegram of Staff of 6th Army of KOVO to District  
Chief of Staff**

21 June 1941  
0135 hours

Army commander requests instructions: should exercises be conducted by staffs of IV Mechanized Corps and VI Rifle Corps planned [in the] region of Rozvaduv, Rozdul, the Dniester River, where all communications and staffs must be transported.

I request accelerated answer.\*

Chief of Staff of 16th Army, Brig Cmdr Ivanov

TsAMO, folio 229, inv. 161, file 26, sheet 64. Original.

\*On telegram there is resolution: init. firing position shifted to next.

Chief of Staff of Southwestern Front, Lt Gen Purkayev

**From the Combat Log of the Western Front**

22 June 1941

...At around 0100 hours, a coded message was received from Moscow with instructions to immediately alert the troops in the event of a German attack which was expected in the morning.

At approximately 0200-0230 hours, an analogous order was given in code: the armies, the units of the UR [fortified area] were ordered to immediately occupy the UR. Upon the alert "Thunder," the Red Packet was to go into effect and this contained the plan for covering the state frontier.

The coded messages from the district staff were received by the army staff, as it turned out, too late. The 3d and 4th Armies were able to decode the order and give some instructions while the 10th Army was decoding the warning even after the start of hostilities....

At 0400 hours on 22 June, the district staff began continuously to receive reports chiefly through the air defense system on bombings.

At 0400 hours on 22 June, German units opened up artillery fire against our troops positioned along the frontier. At 0500 hours, they went over to the offensive along the entire front.

Two squadrons of German aircraft bombed Grodno.

At 0400 hours, Brest was subjected to bombing.

Our fighter aviation was engaged in the area of Karolin (3 km to the southwest of Grodno). At 0525 hours, Lida was subjected to bombing to two aircraft groups (one of two aircraft and the second of three).

At 0430 hours, Volkovysk was bombed by a single aircraft.

At 0430 hours, wire communications with the 3d, 10th and 4th Armies was disrupted.

From the report of the air defense directorate.

At 0400-0430 hours, the company air defense post at Belsk was hit and there were casualties.

At 0400-0430 hours, the airfield of Borisovshchizna (Volkovysk) was bombed.

At 0637 hours, one DO-17 bombed Lida, and dropped five bombs from a great altitude. The bombs hit outside the city.

In Lida a passenger train was hit....

Deputy Chief of Staff of Western Front, Lt Gen  
Malandin

TsAMO, folio 208, inv. 2511, file 207, sheets 4, 10, 11.  
Original.

**Order of Chief of Staff of the 8th Army of the PribOVO**

18 June 1941

The operations group of the army staff is to be moved to the command post of Bubyay by the morning of 19 June.

The location of the new command post is to be readied immediately.

The departure is to be carried out covertly, in individual vehicles.

From the new command post contact is to be organized with the corps over the first half of the day of 19 June.

Chief of Staff of 8th Army, Maj Gen Larionov  
TsAMO, folio 344, inv. 5564, file 1, sheet 16. Original.

**Excerpt From Order of PribOVO Staff**

18 June 1941

In the aim of rapidly alerting the theater of military operations in the district, I order:

4. The commanders of the 8th and 11th Armies:

a) In the sector of each army to determine the points for organizing field dumps, antitank mines, explosives and antipersonnel obstacles in the object of building definite, planned obstacles. The designated supplies are to be concentrated at the organized dumps by 21 June 1941;

b) For laying mine obstacles to determine the men of the teams, from where they are to be provided as well as their work plan. All of this is to be done through the engineer chiefs of the border divisions;

c) To begin to prepare at-hand materials (rafts, barges and so forth) for organizing crossings over the Viliya, Nevysa and Dubissa Rivers. The crossing points are to be established together with the operations section of the district staff.

The 30th and 4th Pontoon Regiments are to be under the military council of the 11th Army. The regiments are to be fully ready to throw up bridges across the Neman River. By a series of exercises they are to inspect the conditions for erecting bridges by these regiments, working for minimum erection times;

f) The commanders of the 8th and 11th Armies, in the aim of destroying the most crucial bridges in the area of the state frontier and the rear line of Shyaulay, Kaunas, the Neman River, are to reconnoiter these bridges, determine the amount of explosive and the demolition teams for each of them and concentrate all the equipment for detonation at the closest points to them. The plan for destroying the bridges is to be approved by the army military council.

Execution date 21 June 1941.

7. The army commanders and the chief of the district ABTV [motor vehicle-armored troops].

From each motor vehicle battalion is to be created separate platoons of tank trucks using for this purpose the mounting of containers on trucks and the number of individual platoons to be organized is four. Date of execution 23 June 1941. These separate platoons as a mobile reserve are to be kept at: Telshay, Shyaulay, Keydany, Ionova at the disposal of the army commanders.

e) From among the district units (with the exception of the mechanized and aviation) select gasoline tank trucks and turn over 50 percent of them to each of the III and XII Mechanized Corps. Date of execution 21 June 1941;

f) Take every measure to provide each vehicle and tractor with spare parts and through the chief of the OSG [fuel supply section] the supplies for fueling the vehicles (funnels, buckets).

Cmdr of PribOVO, Lt Gen Kuznetsov	Chief of Staff, Lt Gen Klenov	Military Council Member, Corps Commissar Dibrova
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TsAMO, folio 344, inv. 5564, file 1, sheets 12-13.  
Original.

**Report of Commander of 125th Rifle Division to Commander of PribOVO**

18 June 1941  
2010 hours

According to clandestine data and the data of escaping persons, in recent days in the Tilsit area the Germans have concentrated up to seven divisions, not counting the troops located in the Shilute area and to the north-east.

A portion of the troops has been moved directly up to the frontier.

There are motor mechanized divisions.

[From] our side [the measures] of an antidefensive nature have not been taken and which would guarantee against an attack by the motor mechanized units, and the Germans have merely to employ a single tank battalion and the holding garrison could be caught by surprise.

The interior detail and patrols can only warn the units but not support.

The area of the forward security area is without garrisons and would not hold up the troops of a German offensive, while the border units might not promptly warn the field troops.

The zone of the division's forward security area is closer to the state frontier than to the division's units and without preliminary measures to calculate the times the Germans will seize this before our units have reached there.

In reporting on the situation which has developed on the frontier, I request:

1. To provide instructions as to what measures I can now carry out and which would guarantee against a surprise invasion of German motor mechanized units or give me the right myself to work out a plan of measures but the division has little means for this.

2. For shortening the time required to bring the units to combat readiness, allow the soldier to be equipped with a backpack, a ground cloth, a helmet and 60 combat cartridges. In this instance, combat readiness of the subunits can be achieved in 10-15 minutes.

3. Accelerate the solution to the question of the families of the leadership, as the latter can disrupt the work of the commanders.

4. Allow me to assign not two battalions but four to work on the zone of the forward security area.

5. Order the UNS [director of supply chief] to accelerate the building of antitank and antipersonnel obstacles on the line of the UR.

6. It would be desirable to have a tank unit and an antitank division and artillery besides the battalion one in the area of Yanishki and Strgutyshki Stations, as one of the probable axes for advance for the motor mechanized units.

Cmdr of 125th Rifle Division Maj Gen Bogaychuk

TsAMO, folio 344, inv. 5564, file 10, sheets 3-4. Original.

#### Directive of PribOVO Staff

19 June 1941

1. To direct the organizing of the defensive zone. Emphasis on preparing the positions in the basic zone of the UR and work here to be strengthened.

2. In the forward security area, complete the work. But the positions of the forward security area are to be taken up only in the event of the enemy's violation of the state frontier.

For ensuring the rapid taking up of positions both in the forward security area as well as the main defensive zone, the appropriate units should be in complete combat readiness.

In the area behind one's positions, check the reliability and speed of communications with the border units.

3. Particular attention is to be paid not to cause provocation and panic in our units and strengthen supervision over combat readiness. Everything is to be done without noise, firmly and calmly. Each commander and political worker must clearly understand the situation.

4. Minefields are to be set up according to the plan of the army commander and should be where they are also designated according to the plan for defensive construction. Attention is to be paid to complete secrecy for the enemy and security for our units. Areas and other

antitank and antipersonnel obstacles should be established according to the plan of the army commander as well as to the plan of defensive construction.

5. The staffs of the armies, corps and divisions are to be at their command posts which would ensure antitank defense upon the plan of the corresponding commander.

6. Our units which are moving up should reach their own shelter areas. Consideration must be given to the more frequent instances of an overflight of the space frontier by German aircraft.

7. Continue steadily to supply the units with ammunition and other types of supplies.

The subunits are to be properly led on the march and in position.

Cmdr of PribOVO, Chief of Staff Lt  
Col Gen Kuznetsov Gen Klenov

Chief of Political  
Propaganda Directorate Ryabchiy

TsAMO, folio 344, inv. 5564, file 1, sheets 34-35. Original.

#### Order of Commander of 8th Army of PribOVO to Commanders of X and XI Rifle Corps

20 June 1941

1. Again affirm that the combat structures in the zone of the forward security area are not to be occupied by the units. Subunits are to stay behind structures in combat readiness, in working to strengthen the defenses.

2. Obstacles are to be made in such a manner that they cannot be spotted from the side of the frontier.

Cmdr of 8th Army, Maj Gen Sobennikov

TsAMO, folio 344, inv. 5564, file 10, sheet 36. Original.

#### Report of 11th Army Staff to Chief of Staff of PribOVO\*

20 June 1941  
2346 hours

A deserter apprehended during the night of 20 June 1941 from the 13th Company of the 58th Infantry Regiment of the 6th Infantry Division has stated that their company is in Psherosl (a company of 150-mm heavy guns). The 6th Infantry Division was moved by trains to the Suvalki area at the end of May from Paris and disembarked some 180 km from Psherosl.

While in Suvalki, the deserter stated, there was a large number of troops in Suvalki and at the given time all the troops have been moved from Suvalki to the frontier.

Infantry is positioned 5 km from frontier, artillery at positions and deserter did not see large tank units.

Deserter stated that the German units are not digging trenches by the frontier, planning to go over to the

offensive. In the words of the deserter, military operations will commence in 8-10 days. It has been 2 months now that the officers have agitated the soldiers saying that the USSR is the main enemy of Germany. Some 50 percent of the soldiers is inclined against a war.

Chief of Staff of 11th Army, Maj Gen Shmelin  
TsAMO, folio 221, inv. 1394, file 2, sheet 76.

\*On document there is a resolution: "Reported to Moscow, to Comrade Korenevskiy, 26 June 1941."

**Report of Commander of Red Banner Baltic Fleet to Commanders of Leningrad and Baltic Special Military Districts and to Chief of Border Troops**

20 June 1941

Units of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet from 19 June 1941 have been on alert according to Plan No. 2, the command posts have been established, patrol service has been strengthened in the mouth of the Gulf of Finland and the Irben Strait.

Cmdr of Baltic Fleet, Vice Adm Tributs  
TsAMO, folio 221, inv. 1394, file 2, sheet 59. Original.

**Order of PribOVO Staff of Commanders of 8th, 11th and 27th Armies**

21 June 1941  
1430 hours

Commencing with this evening, upon special orders, blackout conditions are to be introduced in the garrisons and troop positions. Motor transport is to be provided with blackout equipment. Careful supervision is to be organized over the quality of blacking out. Particular attention is to be paid to the state of camouflaging for troops and equipment conducting air observation.

Assistant Cmdr of Northwestern Front for Air Defense,  
Col Karlin

TsAMO, folio 344, inv. 5564, file 1, sheet 62. Original.

**Order of the PribOVO Staff to the Commander of the 3d Rifle Brigade**

21 June 1941  
1605 hours

All airfields on Ezel and Dago Islands that do not have aviation based there should immediately be put out of operation, covered with large rocks, trees, stumps and other heavy articles but the earthen surface should not be destroyed.

Report execution on 25 June 1941.

Deputy Cmdr of PribOVO, Lt Gen Sofronov  
TsAMO, folio 221, inv. 1394, file 22, sheet 340. Original.

**Intelligence Summary of PribOVO Staff No. 02**

21 June 1941  
2000 hours

According to data which can be considered reliable, the Germans have concentrated troops within East Prussia. According to reliable data, on 20 June 1941 there was troop train traffic on the railroad sector Konigsberg, Tilsit, the frontier.

The moving up of units to the frontier is continuing.

Along the frontier intense fortification work is continuing. Construction of new pontoon bridges across the Neman River has been completed in the area of: Rus, Tatmishken, Yeloken, Tilsit, Vindel; construction is continuing in the area of Vishvill, and particularly forced construction of pontoon bridges has been noted in the Vinga area.

Guarding of the frontier and the surveilling of our territory have been entrusted to field units.

In the Klaypeda area, the civilian population (chiefly elderly) has been instructed to be evacuated into the interior some 20 km away from the frontier.

In Suvalki district, the inhabitants have been moved back 5 km from the frontier.

On 12 June 1941 in the Suvalki area, there was a census of horses which should be confiscated for the army on 20 June 1941.

Among the servicemen and civilian population in East Prussia, there are talks that the troops stationed in East Prussia have received orders to take up the forming-up position for an offensive.

**First. Shyaulay Sector**

a) The data of our clandestine intelligence have confirmed and established the following disposition:

Klaypeda: Staff of 291st Infantry Division, 504th, 505th and 506th Infantry Regiments, 291st Artillery Regiment, 291st Panzer Battalion, 291st Combat Engineer Battalion, 291st Signals Battalion; 7 regiments of shore defense consisting of an artillery battalion and 2 infantry battalions; heavy antiaircraft regiment, tank battalion of 20th Armored Division. Detachment of assault troops consisting of 3 companies.

Priekule: Reserve battalion of 348th Infantry Regiment of 217th Infantry Division.

Shilute: 161st Motorized Division at full strength, tank battalion of 20th Armored Division.

Tilsit: Staff of VII Army Corps, staff of 1st Infantry Division, 216th, 43d, 53d Infantry Division, 203d Reserve Battalion, 21st Light Artillery Regiment, 22d Heavy Artillery Regiment, 101st Tank Battalion, staff of 8th Mechanized Division, 202d, 204th, 227th Motor Mechanized Regiment, 505th Motorized Heavy Artillery Regiment.



Staff of 290th Infantry Division, 501st, 502d, 503d Infantry Regiment, 290 Artillery Regiment.

Staff of 20th Armored Division, numbering of units making up division not precisely established.

Staff of 1st Cavalry Brigade, 1st and 2d Cavalry Regiments, 1st Artillery Battalion.

Air group up to 63 aircraft.

Neukirch: Staff of 217th Infantry Division, 348th Infantry Regiment, number of remaining units comprising division not established.

Konigsberg: Staff of 1st Army, staff of VIII Army Corps, staff of 4th and 43d Infantry Divisions, staff of III Army Corps (data require verification).

21st, 207th, 201st, 210th Infantry Regiments, 25th Motor Mechanized Regiment, 4th and 9th Artillery Regiment, armored regiment, staff of 1st Air District, at Konigsberg Airfield up to 300 aircraft of unidentified types.

Pillau: 215th Naval AA Artillery Regiment, heavy artillery regiment, air unit up to 100 seaplanes and up to 50 Ju-87.

Tapiau: Staff of 205th Infantry Division (previously, in summary No. 15, we pointed out the units making up the 205th Infantry Division in Memel Oblast).

Nattkishken, Koadiuten: Tank battalion of 20th Armored Division and artillery battalion of 511th Heavy Artillery Regiment.

b) According to data 105th PO [Border Detachment] in Klaypeda they have spotted the staff of the 61st Rifle Division, in the forest up to a battalion of infantry and a cavalry squadron, in the forest up to a battalion of tanks with artillery; in the forest up to two tank battalions (data require verification).

Note. According to our agent data, staff of 61st Rifle Division not noted in Klaypeda.

#### Second. Kaunas-Vilno Sector

a) The move-up of German troops directly to the state frontier is continuing. In the region of Sudavsk they have built up to an infantry battalion with six cannons which have been moved up from Verzhniki.

b) According to data of 4th post of 107th PO it has been noted that in the period from 14 June through 15 June 1941, up to 200 tanks have been moved across Seyny.

In the Avgustov forests, in the area of Verzhniki, Kalety, Kukla, they have confirmed the concentration of up to an infantry corps, artillery, up to 200 tanks, up to 400 motor vehicles.

In the Seyny area, the 26th Infantry Division, Suvalki the 17th and 37th Motorized Divisions, AA Artillery Regiment.

In the Bryzgol, Lyas-Podsterskiy area, units of 5th Infantry Division.

Note: Previously, according to our data, the 5th Infantry Division was noted in the Shilute area. We did not note its departure from Shilute.

c) Our agent data have confirmed and established on the Kaunas, Vilno sector, the following dispositions:

Interburg, staff of XII Army Corps, staff of 16th Infantry Division, staff of 22d Infantry Division (in Summary No. 15, according to unverified data, we noted the staff of the XXII Army Corps and clearly this was the staff of the 22d Infantry Division).

27th, 29th, 69th Infantry Regiments, 10th, 42d Reserve Infantry Battalions.

61st, 206th Artillery Regiments, 4th Antitank Artillery Regiment, 206th Cavalry Regiment, 25th Tank Battalion, 335th Convoy Battalion, 16th Air Group with up to 170 aircraft.

Gumbinnen: Staff of 120th Infantry Division (in Summary No. 15, we previously noted the staff of an unidentified infantry division), 222d, 203d, 204th Infantry Regiments, 317th AA Artillery Battalion, 494th Reserve Infantry Battalion.

Stallupenen: Staff of 405th Infantry Regiment with 1st, 2d and 3d Battalions of 405th Infantry Regiment located along frontier in Addkunen area.

#### Conclusions:

1. The concentration of German troops is continuing up to the frontier and from the interior into the regions of East Prussia.

2. The general troop grouping continues to remain in the former areas.

3. It is essential to establish the reliability of the disposition in Konigsberg of the staff of the III Army Corps, the staff of the 1st Army. (Our data for an extended time has noted the staff of the 18th Army. Data on its departure have not been received.)

Do there continue to be units not indicated in this summary which were previously noted by us?

Chief of Staff of PribOVO, Lt Gen Lenov  
Deputy Chief of Intelligence Section of PribOVO Staff,  
Kashnikov

TsAMO, folio 221, inv. 1362, file 5, sheets 27-30.  
Original.

#### Directive of Political Propaganda Directorate of PribOVO

21 June 1941  
2135 hours

The situation requires complete combat readiness of the units. It is essential in every possible way to strengthen

the explanation for the personnel of the complexity of the international situation fraught with all sorts of unforeseen events.

All actions of the commanders, the political workers, the Red Armymen should be directed at completely executing the task and increasing the combat skill of the troops. Combat training should not be halted for a minute. Training must be carried out on the march, during the moves and in concentration areas. All shortcomings detected in combat training in carrying out assignments should be carefully considered, they should be reported and the measures immediately taken to eliminate them.

Clear order is to be instituted in the rears and second echelons. The chiefs of the political bodies and the deputy commanders for political affairs must precisely know the battle tasks and report to the superior political body. Organize a precise count of the men and constant supervision of their activities. At present, it is particularly important that all the political workers be constantly in the masses of troops and explain to the Red Armymen all questions that are unclear for them. The communists and Komsomol members should in deed show examples of discipline and vigilance.

The political propaganda sections of the corps and divisions are not to be given written directives in the unit. The tasks of political work are to be given verbally through our representatives.

The current directive is immediately and completely to be issued to the chiefs of the formation political bodies.

Chief of Political Propaganda Directorate of PribOVO  
Ryabchiy

TsAMO, folio 334, inv. 5564, file 1, sheet 47. Original.

**Order of Commander of 8th Army of PribOVO to  
Commander of XI Rifle Corps**

21 June 1941  
2215 hours

In order to quickly bring the theater of military operations to combat readiness, the commander of the 8th Army orders:

1. Immediately to begin preparing available materials (rafts, barges and so forth) for establishing crossings over the Dubissa River.

Crossing points will be given subsequently.

Chief of Staff of 8th Army, Maj Gen Larionov

TsAMO, folio 344, inv. 5564, file 10, sheet 53. Original.

**Order of Staff of 27th Army of PribOVO**

22 June 1941  
0345 hours

The Germans may undertake actions by small groups to violate our frontier. Do not succumb to provocation.

Cmdr of 27th  
Army, Maj Gen  
Berzarin

Chief of Staff, Col  
Boloznev

Military Council  
Member,  
Divisional Com-  
missar Batrakov

TsAMO, folio 325, inv. 4579, file 1-L, sheet 43. Original.

**WEHRMACHT DOCUMENTS**

**High Command of Ground Forces, General Staff of  
Ground Forces, IV Ober-Quartermaster, Section of For-  
eign Armies East ■■■ No 35/41 Top Secret**

**Headquarters, 20 Mar 41. For Chiefs of Superior Staffs  
Only! Transmit by officer only!**

**Intelligence Summary No. 2**

1) In the Baltic, every night since 10 March, train traffic has been observed (8-12 trains) carrying infantry and tanks in the direction of Lithuania, basically via Riga. Proceeding from the movements of the units on the frontier, it can be concluded that there is the following grouping:

To the east of Kretinga—1-2 divisions, 1 motor. mech. brigade (?)

To the east of Taurage—1 division, motor. mech. brigade (?)

East of Virbalis—1 division, 1 motor. mech. brigade (?)

To the east of Kalvariya—1 division.

2) In front of the central part of the Eastern Front (between Grodno and Vlodava), according to unconfirmed data, there are (to a depth of 250 km):

Four corps staffs Five divisions One motor. mech. brigade

Confirmation lacking

3) Ahead of the Southern Front (between Vlodava and the Black Sea), according to unconfirmed data, there are (to a depth of 250 km):

Four corps staffs Seven divisions Five motor. mech. brigades

Their main forces are in area  
between Lvov and Chernovtsy

Here, in the region of Proskurov, there possibly is a large motor mechanized group (staff of large formation, two motor mechanized brigades, one motor transport brigade).

Confirmation lacking.

According to unconfirmed data, on 15 March, Mar Timoshenko arrived at the staff of the PribOVO for a meeting.

On 14 and 15 March, in the units of the Riga Garrison, exercises were conducted in the course of which it was openly stated that there would be a war with Germany.

Conclusions: Division groups in the Baltic, the effective strength of which has not been precisely established but which has been approximately assessed as four or five divisions and three motor mechanized brigades (?), can be viewed as the cover forces deployed on the line of Venta—Dubisa—Neman and the number of which is still unknown.

Signed: Kinzel

TsAMO, inv. 12462, file 584, sheets 4-5. Translated from the German.

**Fuhrer and Supreme Commander-in-Chief of Armed Forces**

**Fuhrer Headquarters, 13 May 1941**

**Ukase on Employment of Military Jurisdiction and on Special Troop Measures**

Jurisdiction in the armed forces serves primarily to maintain military discipline.

The large expanses of the operational regions in the East, the form of combat determined by this and the specific features of the enemy confront the court's martial with tasks which they, considering their small number can carry out during hostilities and before the first passification of the conquered territory only in the event that jurisdiction is limited to the carrying out of their main task.

This is possible only when the troops themselves will rebuff any threat by the enemy civilian population.

In accord with this for the operational areas, rear areas of the army groups and in the sphere of political leadership, the following is to be established:

**I. Crimes by the Civilian Population of the Enemy Side**

1. Crimes by civilians of the enemy side are not in the competence of the military tribunals or military field courts.

2. Partisans are to be subjected to merciless annihilation in combat or in attempting to flee.

3. All other armed actions by civilians of the enemy side against the Wehrmacht, its servicemen and employees are to be suppressed on the spot by extreme means, including the destruction of the attacker.

4. If such measures are not undertaken or were not originally possible, then the suspects should be immediately delivered to an officer who decides whether they should be executed.

Collective coercive measures are to be immediately taken against population points from which our units have been treacherously attacked, upon orders of an officer holding a position of not lower than battalion

commander, if circumstances do not make it possible to quickly establish the specific guilty parties.

5. It is prohibited to take into custody suspected criminals in order with the restoration of judicial proceedings for the civilian population, to remand them to court.

6. The commanders of the army groups, with the agreement of the competent bodies of the Air Forces and Navy, can institute military judicial proceedings over the civilian population where the locality has been sufficiently pacified.

In terms of political leadership, orders will be issued by the chief of staff of the Supreme High Command of the Armed Forces.

**II. Crimes of Wehrmacht Servicemen and Employees Against the Local Population**

1. Wehrmacht servicemen and employees who have committed any actions against the civilian population of the enemy side, are to be held liable without fail, even in the instance that these actions simultaneously are a military crime.

2. In judging such infractions, it must be considered that the defeat in 1918, the subsequent years of suffering and hardship for the German people and the struggle against National Socialism which involved numerous victims are to be explained to a decisive degree by Bolshevik influence and that no German has forgotten this.

3. The chairman of the tribunal decides whether in such instances a disciplinary reprimand is to be imposed or court intervention is required. The tribunal chairman sets prosecution for a crime against the local population by a military field court only when this is required by the maintaining of military discipline or troop security. This applies, for example, to major crimes which are explained by sexual license, by an inclination for crime or show a decline in the morale level in the troops. As a rule, crimes which cause harm to our troops (senseless destruction of housing, supplies or other captured property) are to be strictly judged.

In each individual instance, an investigation is to be commenced only upon orders of the tribunal chairman.

4. Extreme caution is required in assessing the reliability of evidence given by civilians from the enemy side.

**III. Responsibility of Troop Commanders**

Commanders within their competence bear personal responsibility for seeing to it:

1) That all officers of their subordinate subunits promptly and in the most accessible form are informed of the situation in Part 1;

2) That their legal consultants be acquainted with these instructions and with the verbal messages in which the political plans of the command are explained to the commanders;

3) That only sentences be handed down which would correspond to the political plans of the command.

#### IV. Measures to Maintain Secrecy

After promulgation the current Ukase is to be given the security classification "Top Secret."

Signed: Keitel

TsAMO, inv. 12462, file 564, sheets 23-26. Translated from the German.

Maj Gen Oberhauser, Signals Chief of Army Group B  
21 April 1941

#### To Staff of Army Group B

To Attention of: Fortress Staff Blaurok

#### On Question of Extraordinary Incident on Russian Frontier

On 21 April, as part of a trip to East Prussia, in passenger car H135054 (driver, Sgt Gitze) and accompanied by Lt Col Bedenk, Maj Niks and Sr Lt Rucker, I made a trip to the area of Suvalki to inspect the camouflaging of the communications lines crossing the frontier.

At around 1100 hours, I was driving along the Seyny-Berzniki Road in the direction of the Imperial frontier. In order not to attract excessive attention, I was wearing a cape and ordered that the staff flag be removed from the car. At approximately 50 m from an unpainted bar near an embankment we got out of the car.

We assumed that a German border box was located in the wooden hut standing some 100 m from us. We went around the pole and since no sentry was visible, went up to the box. I opened the door, glanced in and saw that there was no one in the box. In the corner of the room was a collapsed stove.

When I expressed surprise over the state of the room, Maj Niks pointed out that here clearly there was no permanent border post but only a patrol. We assumed that the hut served as a temporary stop for the patrols. We spent about 5 minutes near the hut and from the elevation inspected the German and Russian territory. The hill was woody. A barbed wire stretched through the brush approximately at the elevation of the hut on both sides of the road running from north to south and this we considered the frontier and did not cross. The path along the forest seemed to be the border road. To the south of the road, the forest had been felled in a certain area. Fallen trees lay all around. Where the forest ended, the frontier was marked by tall pines with green tops.

Suddenly, Lt Col Bedenk pointed to two persons who were approaching us from the south through the brush with their rifles at the ready. We very quickly, to our

amazement, realized that they were not German border troops but rather Russian ones. Without any doubt they were soldiers. They were wearing greenish-brown coats with leather straps, caps which were pulled down tight and their bayonets were affixed to the rifles. They made the impression of very young and indecisive soldiers. When they were 20 paces from us, one of them took up a position behind a tree trunk and prepared to fire while the other shouted: "Stop, stop!" We pulled out our pistols and also shouted in Russian: "Stop" and returned to our vehicle unimpeded. We got in the car and drove to Berzniki in order to report what had happened to the local customs official. At a fork in the road near Berzniki we were halted by a sentry from the 6th Antitank Battalion and told that he has orders to hold up all transport heading toward the Imperial frontier.

In a statement that there had been a violation of the frontier by the Russian side, I informed the official for guarding the frontier in Berzniki, and namely the customs secretary, of all that had happened. From him I learned that the hut was on Russian territory and, consequently, there had been a violation of the frontier by our side.

I informed the customs commissar in Seyny, Schubel, of the event.

I confirmed the following:

1) On the road to the frontier we were not stopped by sentries and did not see any of them at all.

2) It seems advisable to me to put up a bar at Berzniki.

3) I consider it completely essential that the frontier be clearly marked by an indicator or a state emblem. To any objective person a crossbar is a sign to "Stop" for means of transport. For any objective person, it would be assumed that a German border post was in the wooden hut. In the mentioned place there was neither shield nor state emblem and the bar was not painted in German colors.

4) The bar which we went around was obviously a Russian one. We cannot understand why there was no German one.

5) In the course of an official trip in January of this year, I had an opportunity along the Russian frontier between Sanok and Ostrolenka to see many border posts and was amazed how well the line of the frontier is marked by wire fences, bars (the Germans are black-white-red and the Russian are green-red) and permanent posts. For this reason, I could not even imagine that in the Suvalki area the frontier was not marked at all on the German side.

6) I consider it essential that all roads leading to the frontier be provided with control barriers and indicators and if possible permanent posts be set up.

Signed by Maj Gen Oberhauser

TsAMO, inv. 12462, file 586, sheets 96-98. Translated from German.

**Section of Intelligence and Counterintelligence  
Counterintelligence Officer**

**27 April 1941**

**Daily Report of Fortress Staff Blaurok**

Supplement: On 26 April 1941, between 2000 and 2100 hours, a Russian junior lieutenant, two junior sergeants and one private mistakenly crossed the German frontier on the Kalvariya—Suvalki Road. They were in a single-horse troop cart (see Daily Report of 27 April).

An interrogation of the Russian soldiers disclosed the following:

The soldiers belonged to the 3d Battalion of a howitzer artillery regiment. Their position was in Kalvariya. Affiliation: 128th Rifle Division, also in Kalvariya.

These data are contained in the identification of the junior lieutenant who was rephotographed by the counterintelligence body in Letzen.

Four soldiers were born in 1918, one in 1921. Nationality: two Ukrainians, three Russians, one of them from Kursk and one from Ryazan. Three soldiers wore an artillery uniform (black shoulder board); two wore white shoulder loops and they asserted that they were serving in a reconnaissance platoon of an artillery regiment. The troop wagon was marked "91/40." Weapons: four sub-machine guns, one rifle with a bayonet, one donkey ears, live cartridges. Weapons in good condition. Clothing and other supplies of Russian soldiers good.

TsAMO, inv. 12462, file 586, sheet 89. Translated from German.

**Command of 4th Panzer Group,  
Operations Section  
No. 249/41 Top Secret  
For Command Only**

**Group Staff  
14 June 1941**

**Order on Combat Employment of 800th Special-Purpose  
Training Regiment Brandenburg.**

1. Within the 4th Panzer Group up to one company is to be made available for the 800th Special-Purpose Training Regiment Brandenburg consisting of 2 officers and 220 junior officers and rank-and-file.

For camouflage purposes, the company is to be designated a "security company."

Capt Valter is to be appointed as the liaison officer of the 800th Special-Purpose Training Regiment Brandenburg on the staff of the 4th Panzer Group for the questions of the combat employment of the regiment.

**2. Subordination:**

To the LVI Army Corps: 1 officer, 65 men of junior officer and rank-and-file personnel, transport for 30 persons; around 10-15 persons with a knowledge of the language (to be assigned additionally by special order).

For the XLI Army Corps: 1 officer, 95 men of junior officer and rank-and-file personnel, transport for 30 persons; around 10-15 men with a knowledge of the language (to be assigned additionally by special order).

**3. Transport and billeting:**

The subunits assigned to the corps are to arrive: on day W-5 in Gross Lenkenau for the LVI Army Corps; at day W-5 in Ulmental for the XLI Army Corps (2 km to the east of Sanfelde).

If possible, they are to be billeted separately from the other units and subunits and upon arrival at destination logistic support will be assumed by corps.

**4. Combat employment:**

Combat employment of the subunits has been agreed upon by the representative of the corps and the liaison officer of the 800th Special-Purpose Training Regiment Brandenburg by personal contact.

Proceeding from the existing experience, their combat employment as part of the forward detachments is particularly promising.

The troop commanders who have been assigned special subunits must be carefully instructed on the tasks and methods of action of the "security company."

The combat groups must be employed solely for carrying out their specific tasks and when the situation and scope of the tasks promise success; consideration must be given to them and they must be employed only for major objectives; they are to be promptly supported by the commander's own subunits in order that the groups do not suffer unjustified losses.

Before setting off to carry out a battle assignment, the troop commanders should call in the commanders of the special subunits, hear their proposals and requests and only then determine the form of combat employment and camouflage uniforms.

In order to avoid useless losses from friendly fire, a liaison officer from the "security company" should be assigned to the forward troop detachments which should seize the designated objective and the storming of which has already been commenced by the special groups. With the approach to the objective, this liaison officer should warn the special group of the "security company" on the approach of the forward detachments.

The password for the troop formations and the groups of the "security company" is Veklabryuk. For the purposes of camouflage the password should be issued to all the forward detachments only when the order for the offensive is given. Moreover, the forward troop detachments and the groups of the "security company" should agree upon identifying signs.

The first motor vehicles captured from the enemy and particularly reconnaissance armored vehicles and other such, weapons and ammunition and supplies should be immediately turned over to the special groups of the



"security company," so that they have everything necessary for carrying out their specific tasks.

#### 5. Supply of motor vehicle equipment:

The "security company" is fully motorized, however in the course of carrying out its tasks it can suffer losses and may not always have an opportunity to replenish them. Broad support and supply of the company is in the interests of the corps.

Three days prior to the start of hostilities, the corps are to report on their final decision concerning the combat employment of the special group with an indicating of the objectives. With the start of hostilities, they are to report constantly on the proposed combat employment and on the results.

For the Commander of the Panzer Group, Chief of Staff  
(signature)  
Draft signed by C. de Beaulieu

TsAMO, inv. 12462, file 594, sheets 5-8. Translated from German.

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#### Previously Unpublished Excerpts From Rokossovskiy Memoirs

00010013f VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL  
in Russian No 5, May 89 (signed to press 6 May 89)  
pp 59-62

[Article, published under the heading "Cuts, Omissions and Withdrawals," by MSU K.K. Rokossovskiy: "A Soldier's Duty"; the article is a continuation. See VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, No 4, 1989 for previous installment]

[Text] On 26 June, I was driving with a group of staff officers out to one of the elevations in the positions of the fighting units of the 20th Tank Division. From here we observed the movement of an enormous column of enemy vehicles, tanks and artillery out of Dubno toward Rovno. Simultaneously, moving from the south toward our 20th and 35th Tank Divisions were panzer, motorized and infantry units with artillery. An equally alarming message had arrived from the commander of the 131st Mechanized Division. He reported that the enemy (infantry with tanks) had thrown back the division's units defending on the line of the Styr River and was crossing the river on a broad front. Consequently, on the sector where our corps was fighting one could expect an attack by larger forces.

It is essential to point out that by this time which I am mentioning, the situation was completely bad in terms of the informing of the troops on the situation at the front. One had to secure one's own information. And while we were able more or less to figure out and guess the events on our sector, we knew nothing about what had happened or was happening on the sector of the other armies of the Southwestern Front. Clearly, the staff of the 5th Army also knew nothing for it did not inform us. Contact

between the corps and the 5th Army staff was more often lacking and was periodically interrupted with the adjacent units.

We learned that the XXII Mechanized Corps had been attacked by the enemy, it had suffered heavy losses and had been pushed back to the northeast of Lutsk. The adjacent unit on the left, the XIX Mechanized Corps, in attempting to go over to the offensive, had also been attacked by the enemy and, in suffering heavy losses, had been thrown back toward Rovno where it was continuing to fight.

Toward evening on 25 June, arriving at the command post of our corps in the Klevani area on foot was the commander of a tank division from the XX Mechanized Corps, if my memory does not fail me, Maj Gen Semchenko, in a very upset state and with a bandaged right hand. He informed us that his division had been completely destroyed. He had succeeded in escaping but, in firing his revolver, he was caught by a German tank. He was able to avoid the tank and fell down and here his hand fell under the tank track.

Soon thereafter, also ending up here, was one of the commissars from the regiment of the same corps who informed us of the death of Gen Kondrusev and their corps had been destroyed. The depressed tone and confusion of the division commander and regimental commissar forced me to advise them rather forcefully to immediately stop talking about the loss of the corps and to begin to seek out their units and join up with them.

The evening before in the area of the same Klevani, we assembled many soldiers among whom were a number of officers. A majority of these men was without weapons. To our shame, all of them, including the officers, had torn off their insignias.

In one of these groups my attention was drawn to a middle-aged person sitting under a pine tree and whom, by his appearance and manner, certainly did not resemble a soldier. Sitting next to him was a young nurse. Turning to those seated, and there were at least a hundred of them, I ordered the officers to step forward. No one moved. Raising my voice, I repeated the order two or three times. And again came silence and immobility. Then, going up to the older "duffer" and ordered him to stand up. Then, having given the name of the commander, I asked his rank. The word "colonel" came out so indifferently and at the same time with such a brazen challenge that his appearance and tone literally made me explode. Seizing my pistol, I was ready to shoot him on the spot. The apathy and bravado instantly disappeared from the colonel. Realizing how this could all end, he fell to his knees and began to seek mercy, vowing that he would atone for his infamy with his blood. Of course, the scene was not a pleasant one, but that was how it was.

The colonel was ordered to assemble all those like him by morning, to organize a team of them and report personally to me in the morning of the 26th. The order was

carried out. There were over 500 men in the assembled team. They all were employed for making up the losses in the motorized units of the corps.

At the height of the fighting at Novograd-Volynskiy and to the southeast of it, I received orders from Headquarters on appointing me the commander of the army of the Western Front and for my immediate presence in Moscow.

On 14 July, I set off by car to Kiev.

I arrived in the city at night and was struck by the emptiness and the foreboding quiet which prevailed in it.

The Kreshchatik which usually at this time was full of people and resounding with conversations, noise, laughter and the sparkling shop windows was empty, silent and submersed in darkness. Not a single living soul could be seen on the streets. Having halted the vehicle in order to find out where the front's staff was located, I lit a cigarette. And immediately out of the gloom came: "Put out the fire!..." "What, are you fed up with life?..." "Immediately douse that!..." Other words rang out, even stronger ones. This, I must admit, greatly amazed me. And the voices were very hysterical. This seemed not like reasonable caution but rather indications of panic fear. So I had to obey and quickly extinguish the cigarette.

The front's command post was in Brovary, on the eastern bank of the Dnieper. I spent the remainder of the night at the front staff and in the morning reported to the front's commander, Col Gen M.P. Kirponos. I was extremely amazed by his striking confusion. Having obviously noticed my amazement, he tried to calm down but was unable to do so. He listened distractedly to my brief information on the situation in the sector of the 5th Army and the corps, he interrupted frequently, running up to the window with cries of "What is the air defense doing?... The aircraft are in the air and no one is shooting them down...chaos!" He immediately ordered that the activities of the air defense be intensified and that the air defense chief be summoned to him. Yes, this was confusion, since in the situation existing at that time, in my view, another front commander would not have been bothered with air defense.

In truth, he was trying to solve more important questions. Thus, several times over the telephone he issued orders to the staff to transmit orders to someone about decisive counterstrikes. But all of this sounded unconvincing, hurried and unreliable. In ordering one or two divisions to be thrown into battle, the commander was not even interested in whether the designated formations could counterattack, and he did not explain the specific purpose of their employment. The impression was gained that he either did not know the situation or did not want to know it.

During these moments, I finally realized that such vast, complicated and crucial duties were beyond this man and the handful of troops assigned to him.

In this mood, I left the staff of the Southwestern Front and headed to Moscow. Before I learned that a very difficult situation had also arisen on the Western Front with the Germans approaching Smolensk. In knowing the commander of the Western Front, Gen D.F. Pavlov, long before the start of the war (in 1930, he was the commander of a regiment in the division which I commanded), I could conclude ahead of time that he was the equal of Kirponos, if not even weaker.

On the way, I began reflecting about what had happened and that we had suffered such a major defeat in the initial period of the war.

Of course, one could assume that the enemy which had anticipated us in concentrating and deploying its main forces along the frontier, would push back our cover troops a certain distance. But somewhere, in the interior, according to the realistic calculations of the General Staff, our main forces should be able to deploy. They would meet the enemy in an organized manner and launch a counterstrike against it. Why had this not happened?...

In many works of a military nature, published in our country during the post-October period, one hears and reads sharp criticism of the Russian generals, including the Russian General Staff, who are accused of stupidity, lack of talent, stupid willfulness and so forth. But, in recalling the initial period of World War I and in studying the plan of the Russian General Staff compiled before its start, I was convinced of the reverse.

This plan had been compiled precisely considering all the realistic features which could influence the time of preparedness, concentration and deployment of the main forces. It took into account the comparative abilities of Russia and Germany to mobilize quickly and concentrate their main forces on the frontier. They proceeded from this in determining the deployment line and its distance from the frontier. The forces covering the deployment were also determined in accord with this. For those times, the deployment line was predominantly the line of fortresses. For me, such a plan was comprehensible.

What sort of plan had been worked out and submitted to the government by our General Staff? Was there any plan at all?

I greatly wanted to know where the deployment line had been set. We would assume that previously this had coincided with the line of our UR [fortified area] moved the appropriate distance from the old frontier. This was realistic. But could this line maintain its purpose in 1941? Yes, it could since Nazi Germany had become our neighbor. And it was already waging an aggressive war having fully mobilized its armed forces.

Moreover, necessity had forced us to consider such an important factor as the equipping of the armed forces with new equipment and generally new means which had not been found in the previous armies. And this factor also determined the new nature of conducting a war. For

example, mobility had been significantly increased and, hence, the maneuverability of the troops in the theater of operations.

Without resorting to mobilization, we should have maintained and reinforced and not destroyed our UR along the old frontier. The venture of building the new UR on the very frontier in front of the Germans I also considered foolish. In addition to the fact of a very flagrant violation of the instructions existing on this question, the very situation by the spring of 1941 suggested that we would be unable to build these fortifications. Only the blind could not see this. It was the sacred duty of the General Staff to point out such an obvious thing to the government and defend its own proposals.

The district field trip in June 1941 comes to mind, that is, on the eve of the war, and also the talks with many comrades who clearly assessed the situation which had arisen by that time. We agreed on the opinion that the Germans had freed their hands in the West and were ready to utilize their superiority for an attack on the USSR. But didn't the military leaders of the central and district level feel this? Well, we must assume, the General Staff had been unable to draw up a realistic plan for the initial period of the war in the event of an attack by Nazi Germany. What had caused such criminal laxness permitted by the district command (by the border districts)? From those observations which I made during the period of serving in the KOVO [Kiev Special Military District] and which were confirmed during the first days of the war, I even then concluded that nothing had been done by the local command within its rights and opportunities in order to properly greet the enemy.

It was my good fortune to spend all my service in the Red Army in the border districts: in the Far East, in the Transbaykal, in the Baltic and Leningrad Military Districts. This provided me with an opportunity to thoroughly study the tasks entrusted to the border troops as well as the provisions which obliged them to maintain constant increased combat readiness and the ability within several hours to commence active operations. The disposition of the troops in peacetime was to be determined appropriately. Moreover, during the period of a threatening situation, the troops were to be moved into the previously planned regions. All these questions were to be carefully worked out in military games and in field trips on a district level with the superior command personnel. Approximately such preparations were to be carried out with the commanders in the corps and divisions as well.... These were, but only not in the KOVO. For this reason, the troops of this district from the very first day of the war were completely unprepared to meet the enemy. Their positions did not correspond to the situation which had developed on our frontier of a clear threat of possible attack. Many formations did not have the established unit of fire of ammunition and artillery and the artillery had been moved off to ranges located by the very frontier and left there.

What had happened on 22 June was not provided for by any plans and for this reason the troops were caught by

surprise in every sense of this word. The loss of contact between the district staff and the troops exacerbated the difficult situation.

Events would have occurred completely differently if the district command had been on top of things and had promptly taken the appropriate measures within its powers, showing moreover its own initiative as well as the boldness of assuming responsibility for carrying out the measures dictated by the situation developing along the frontier. But this was not done. Everyone was waiting for instructions from above.

I can judge this even from the content of the operations packet which I opened on the first day of the war. Its content was suited for a mechanized corps which had completed the period of constituting and was supplied with everything it should have as a fighting formation. But since it was only in the first, that is, the initial stage of organization, then both the General Staff as well as the district command should have made provision for its appropriate place in the event of a war. This was the situation not only of the IX Mechanized Corps, but also the XIX, the XXII and others, with the exception of the IV and VIII which had begun to be organized significantly earlier and were more or less capable of joining battle. Moreover, they had the new T-34 and KV tanks.

The saving of the three mentioned corps (there were a total of five in the KOVO) would have played a crucial role in the launching of the subsequent counterstrike together with the combined-arms armies being moved up from the interior of the nation. And as such, because of the poor arming with tanks they were really poor infantry formations, they did not even have the weapons stipulated for a rifle formation. At the same time, their tasks were set proceeding from their purpose, that is, from their formal name and not from their capabilities.

And what were they thinking about, those who compiled the detailed directives, putting them into the operations packets and keeping them behind seven seals? Certainly, their orders were completely unrealistic. Knowing this, they still defended them, in pursuing, I am confident, the goal of justifying themselves in the future, referring to the fact that the orders for "decisive" actions had been given by them to such and such troops (formations). They were not at all concerned by the fact that such an order was the sending of the mechanized corps to their annihilation. Good tank personnel perished in unequal battle in unstintingly carrying out the role of infantry in the fighting.

Even when they knew perfectly clearly the axis of the main thrusts being launched by the German troops as well as their grouping and forces, the district command was incapable of assuming responsibility and taking a fundamental decision to rectify the situation and protect a larger portion of the troops from complete defeat, moving them back to the old fortified area.

If the General Staff did not do this promptly, the district command was obliged to do this, being directly where these tragic events were being played out.

The role of the district command was reduced to a situation where it blindly carried out the directives of the General Staff and headquarters which were obsolete and no longer corresponded to the rapidly changing situation which had arisen on the front. The command consistently, nervously and irresponsibly and, most importantly, without any benefit, tried to apply feeble "bandaids," that is, untrained formations and units, on the breaches formed by the thrusts of the main enemy grouping. At the same time, it was known previously that such "bandaids" could not stop the enemy as neither the time, the situation nor their own capabilities permitted this. The organizing of such measures could have been provided somewhere in the interior of the territory, having assembled the corresponding forces for carrying out these measures. And the district possessed such forces but they were committed to battle and annihilated piecemeal.

I have already mentioned above those orders which were issued by the front commander M.P. Kirponos in my presence and which came down to having one or two divisions thrown under the blows of large enemy forces advancing in an organized manner. What was the result of this? There can only be one answer and that is the annihilation of our forces piecemeal and which helped only the enemy.

In recalling on the way everything that I had seen, felt and discovered during the first weeks of the war, I could not understand at all what was happening.

Certainly, the elementary rules of tactics and operational art, without even involving strategy, stated that, having lost an engagement or battle, the troops should endeavor, while taking cover behind a portion of the forces, to disengage the main forces from the enemy and prevent their complete defeat. Then with the arrival of fresh formations and units from the interior, to organize a dependable defense and subsequently defeat the enemy.

(To be continued)

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#### **On Features of Wehrmacht Preparations for Attack on USSR**

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[Article, published under the heading "World War II," by Col A.S. Yakuchevskiy, candidate of historical sciences: "On Features of Wehrmacht Preparations for Attack on the USSR" ]

[Text] At present, when we have the opportunity to freely discuss the problems of our nation's history, the questions of the preparations of Nazi Germany to attack the USSR can be seen in a largely new light.

In the various Soviet publications on the history of the Great Patriotic War, usually data are given that by 22 June 1941, Germany had concentrated an enormous army of 5.5 million men on the Western frontier of the USSR and unleashed it against the Soviet Union which was able initially to field an army of 2.7-2.9 million men.<sup>1</sup> This emphasizes the almost double numerical superiority of the Nazi troops over the Soviet ones and the reader gains the impression that the shortage of forces was the main reason for our severe defeats in the initial period of the war. However, in reality, the picture of events was somewhat different. If one better analyzes the balance of forces existing at that time, one can discover a number of flaws in the established views.

First of all, it must be considered that in 1940-1941, the German military-political leadership viewed the Soviet Union as an enemy surpassing Germany in terms of the number of weapons and military equipment as well as in terms of the size of the armed forces. According to information of German intelligence, at the beginning of 1941, the USSR Armed Forces had 12,000-14,000 combat aircraft, 10,000 tanks (without training ones) and 180 division-scale formations. By mid-June 1941, the number of authorized divisions in the USSR, according to German data, had reached 240 with 195 of these stationed in the Western regions of the nation and with the start of a war<sup>2</sup> could be employed against the troops of Germany and its satellites. For this reason, in preparing to attack the Soviet Union, the Nazi leadership wagered chiefly not on a quantitative but rather qualitative superiority of the German Army over our own.

The Wehrmacht Command also considered the experience of its previous campaigns in World War II. For example, the success of military operations against the Anglo-French coalition in May-June 1940 was achieved as a result of qualitative superiority of the German troops over the enemy as in terms of the number of troops and weapons the Western Allies were not inferior to Germany and even in some regards surpassed it. In the "Eastern Campaign" they planned to achieve a higher degree of qualitative superiority of the German troops and at the same time increase their numbers.

The total number of the Reich's Armed Forces from May 1940 through June 1941 increased by one-third and reached 7,254,000. Here the number of Ground Forces increased up to 5,170,000 men, the Air Forces to 1,680,000 and the Navy to 404,000. In the Ground Forces, in the operational army there were 3,800,000 men (in March 1940, 3,300,000), in the Reserve Army there were 1,200,000, in the SS Troops 150,000 and in the foreign formations some 20,000 men.<sup>3</sup> During the designated period, the size of the German Air Force increased most (by 71.4 percent). This was achieved primarily by the organizing of new air defense units assigned to protect German territory against air raids. It was possible to increase the number of ground forces (by 23 percent) mainly by organizing new infantry formations and units which began to be employed for occupation service as well as due to an increased number of



administrative and housekeeping services in the reserve army which trained inductees. While in May 1940, the Wehrmacht had only 9 rear security divisions which were considered as occupation forces, in June 1941 there were 41. The number of all divisions in the operational army of Germany over the designated period increased from 156 to 208, that is, by 33.3 percent.<sup>4</sup>

**In endeavoring to increase the number of manpower personnel, the Nazi leadership did not consider, however, this problem to be the main one in preparing for war against the USSR. The basic effort was put on a qualitative improvement in their Armed Forces.** For this purpose, measures were carried out to reconstitute and build up the troops, to increase their training level, equipping with new weapons and equipment, retraining command personnel and improving the organization and establishment of the units and formations.

Immediate preparations of Nazi Germany for a war against the USSR can be divided into three stages. In the first stage (end of June—beginning of October 1940), the main military-political decisions were taken for aggression against the Soviet Union, the overall plan was worked out in detail and discussed, the appropriate reorientation of the armed forces and military economy was commenced and about 30 divisions were shifted from West to East for organizing the theater of operations there. In the course of the second stage (mid-October 1940—mid-February 1941), the basic measures were carried out for the qualitative improvement and increase in the number of troops, work was carried out for the intense organization of the Eastern Theater and intense combat training organized for the troops assigned to the Eastern Campaign.<sup>4</sup> During the third stage (from the second half of February through 22 June 1941), the basic mass of ground troops and virtually all the Air Force was shifted to the East, a portion of the Navy was repositioned, assault groupings were established for the attack on the USSR and the organizing of the Eastern Theater was completed. Moreover, the questions of cooperation between the Ground Forces, the Air Force and Navy and between the Wehrmacht Armed Forces and the allied troops of Finland, Romania and Hungary were worked out, troop command, control and communications were organized and the problems of troop logistic support were solved.

In the first stage one can note a definite "strategic bifurcation" in the actions of the Nazi leadership. Although the decision had been taken to attack the Soviet Union, the plans for an invasion of England were still not halted and this was reflected on the choice of "priorities" in the organizational development of the Armed Forces and in the defense production of Germany.

Even before the complete end of the campaign in the West, on 15 June 1940, Hitler approved the proposal of the General Staff to reduce the total number of Wehrmacht divisions from 156 to 120 with a doubling of the mobile (tank and motorized) formations.<sup>5</sup> However, as the plan

for the war against the USSR matured, changes were incorporated in the adopted decision. Orders were given, for example, during July-August to deconstitute 17 divisions, while the personnel of another 18 divisions was to be given long-term leave, having kept their backbone consisting of professional servicemen.<sup>6</sup>

However, only the divisions having very low battleworthiness were broken up and a larger portion of the personnel of these divisions had by that time reached advanced age for serving in the army. The demobilized troops were sent to work in the defense industry which was experiencing a shortage of skilled manpower in line with the broadening weapons production. As a result, the military authorities were able to induct into the Armed Forces younger people who previously had been deferred as specialists. These persons initially were trained in the units of the reserve army and from here they were sent to the formations of the operational army. This was one of the ways for a qualitative improvement in the German troops.

Discharge on long-term leave was carried out only for divisions which had gained a good deal of combat experience and the servicemen of which did not require additional training. Provision was made so that the discharged personnel, having worked several months at the enterprises in the defense sectors of industry, in January-March 1941, would return to their formations and as part of them participate in the "Eastern Campaign." Thus, the German leadership found a rational method for satisfying the needs of both industry and the Armed Forces and making it possible not to reduce the battleworthiness of the troops.

Of exceptionally important significance for a qualitative improvement in the German Armed Forces was the constituting of 23 new divisions from August 1940 through January 1941; these, the German Command, considered as mobile ones and were designed to create panzer wedges which would ensure a high rate of advance during the advance of the Wehrmacht troops through Soviet territory. Eleven tank divisions, 8 motorized divisions and 4 light infantry divisions were constituted. As a result, by June 1941, the total number of panzer divisions in the Wehrmacht in comparison with May 1940 had risen by 2.1-fold (from 10 to 21 divisions) and the motorized ones (considering the SS divisions) by 2.7-fold (from 6.5 to 17.5 planned divisions). The share of panzer and motorized formations in the operational army over the same period increased from 10.5 to 18 percent.<sup>7</sup>

For organizing 4 light infantry divisions, it was considered that on Soviet territory they would have to operate under conditions of impassable terrain. Instead of 3 infantry regiments, they included just 2. For increasing the cross-country capability, each infantry company had 16 two-wheeled carts and the appropriate number of horses. The antitank guns were transported with armor, on a tracked mount with tractors. The first 2 light battalions of the artillery regiment were armed with



mountain guns while the batteries of the third light battalion and the heavy artillery battalion were motorized. Considering the high cross-country capability of these divisions, the Command planned to employ them in areas with a little-developed road network.<sup>8</sup>

In addition to the 23 mobile divisions, during the designated period they organized 17 new infantry divisions, the 7th, 11th and 12th waves and 3 mountain rifle divisions. These were considered the most battleworthy.

In endeavoring to ensure high battleworthiness of the new formations, the Ground Forces Command included in them units and subunits from formations which already had solid combat experience. Usually, these were entire regiments or battalions. They then served as the basis for establishing new divisions. The basis for the constituting of the 11 new panzer divisions were units and subunits from 6 infantry divisions and 2 motorized divisions as well as 1 motorized brigade. For example, the newly constituted 14th Panzer Division included 2 regiments of the former 4th Infantry Division, while the 3d Regiment of this division became the basis of the 18th Panzer Division. The new panzer divisions also included several machine gun battalions from the High Command Reserve. In the newly constituted mountain rifle and infantry divisions of the 11th and 12th waves, from  $\frac{1}{3}$  to  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the personnel had come from the deconstituted formations of the operational army and from the reserve army (basically they were servicemen born in 1920). Only 39 new divisions constituted in the winter and spring of 1941 and assigned to guard the rear services and stand occupation duty received virtually no reinforcements from the operational army and were basically manned by older servicemen in the army reserve.<sup>9</sup>

Along with organizing new divisions, the previously existing formations were brought up to strength and partially reorganized. They were all shifted to wartime establishments. For providing them with personnel in the autumn of 1940, the remaining persons liable for service and born in 1919 and 1920 were called up. And those who had been called up earlier and who had been trained in the army reserve were shifted to the operational army.<sup>10</sup>

**The complete abandonment of an invasion of the British Isles by the Nazi leadership on 12 October 1940 became an impetus for more intensive operations to reorganize the German Ground Forces in the aim of preparing them for the "Eastern Campaign."** The troops began to be moved from the Western Theater to German territory. There they were reorganized and brought up to strength. At the end of October, the staff of Army Group Z was moved from France to Germany (Dresden) and the staff along with the Reserve Army Command was included in the process of reorganizing and training the troops. Under it were formations moved from the West into Germany as well as newly organized divisions. On 30 October, the Headquarters of the High Command of the Ground Forces was moved from Fontainebleau to the south of

Paris) to Zossen (near Berlin) and this brought it closer to the troops preparing for war against the USSR.<sup>11</sup>

From the second half of October 1940, the reorganization of the ground forces assumed a mass nature. In November, 51 infantry divisions were being reorganized simultaneously and at that time this was over  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the formations in the German operational army. From 25 November, this number rose by another 22 divisions.<sup>12</sup> As a result, in that period the battleworthiness of the German Army declined, since in reconstituting a significant portion of the personnel from the old divisions (often up to  $\frac{1}{2}$ ) was transferred to formations being newly organized. The Nazi Command consciously took a major risk involving such a method of reorganization in order to achieve the highest qualitative level of the operational army by the start of the war against the USSR.

From the beginning of 1941, 18 divisions began to be recreated on a new basis and the personnel of these previously had been put on long-term leave. All persons who previously served in them were returned to these formations. Moreover, they were filled out with servicemen inducted in the autumn of 1940 and who had been trained in the army reserve.

The Nazi Command was concerned ahead of time for preparing trained contingents to replace the losses in the operational army in the course of a war against the USSR. In accord with the plans of the General Staff, it was assumed that these losses would be significantly higher than in the previous campaigns of World War II. While by June 1941, the German Army had lost 97,000 men killed and missing in action, the possible losses in the course of the first 2 months of the "Eastern Campaign," in the opinion of the German Campaign, should be 275,000 men, and by the end of September, already 475,000 men. In referring to these conclusions, the Wehrmacht leadership decided to restore the field reserve battalions disbanded at the beginning of 1940 in the divisions of the operational army. By mid-June 1941, 90,000 men were already serving in these battalions and from them the division commanders could replace the losses of the first weeks of the war. Moreover, after the call-up on 1 March 1941 of the draftees born in 1921 and on 1 May the draftees of 1922, the reserve army was filled out with 475,000 men. In truth, 90,000 of them were assigned to the Air Force. As a whole, the contingent of trained servicemen to fill out the operational ground forces in the course of the "Eastern Campaign" was 7-fold greater than on the eve of the Western Campaign and was around 475,000 men.<sup>13</sup>

An important organizational measure contributing to a qualitative improvement in the German Army prior to the attack on the USSR, aside from bringing the divisions up to strength and increasing their battleworthiness, was the organizing of an appropriate number of superior staffs and reserve units of the High Command. In comparison with May 1940, they additionally organized the staffs of one new army group, four armies, six

army corps, six motorized corps and four reduced-size corps. Of particular importance was the creating of large motorized formations which included panzer, motorized and infantry divisions. For their command in the course of the "Eastern Campaign," in November-December 1940, they organized the staffs of four panzer groups and they also were responsible for operational troop leadership like the army staffs. The panzer groups, like the wedges, were to shatter the enemy defenses and traveling ahead of the armies, would rush to the main objectives of the operations. In contrast to the armies, they were not given tasks of capturing and holding territory.<sup>14</sup> The absence of cumbersome rear transport trains also contributed to the increased mobility of the panzer groups. Logistic support for the panzer group was entrusted to the field armies in the zones of which they were operating.

The increased number of units in the High Command Reserve was achieved primarily by establishing new self-propelled artillery, antiaircraft artillery, engineer, signals, construction and other units for reinforcement and support. In comparison with May 1940, for example, in addition they had constituted 11 separate battalions and 2 batteries of self-propelled artillery mounts, 14 motorized antitank battalions, 4 regiments of six-barrel chemical mortars and over 50 pontoon bridge units.<sup>15</sup>

The use by the German Command for war against the USSR of new weapons which possessed higher performance than in the campaigns in Poland and the West also contributed to achieving qualitative superiority of the German troops over the Soviet ones. Among the new types of weapons and military equipment commissioned for the operational army by 22 June 1941 were: the 50-mm antitank guns, the quadruple 20-mm antiaircraft guns, the six-barrel rocket 158.5-mm chemical mortars with a range up to 6.7 km, and units for throwing heavy rocket-propelled mines with a caliber of 280 and 320 mm.<sup>16</sup>

In comparison with the indicators of the Western Campaign, in the panzer formations being readied for an attack on the USSR, the number of medium tanks was increased by 2.3-fold (from 627 to 1,423). Here mini T-III tanks were armed with a 50-mm cannon instead of a 37-mm cannon. In these divisions medium tanks comprised 39 percent of the total number of tanks assigned for the attack on the USSR. If to the medium tanks one adds another 250 assault guns which in terms of performance corresponded to the medium tanks, then the share of medium tanks in the troops for the war against the USSR had risen to 45 percent. The analogous indicator in the course of the Western Campaign was just 24.5 percent.<sup>17</sup>

Of the 5,700 tanks and assault guns which were available to the Armed Forces by 1 June 1941, the Nazi Command assigned approximately 3,350 combat vehicles to the first operational echelon for the attack on the Soviet Union. Moreover, in the Wehrmacht Command Reserve

assigned to build up the initial thrust, there were approximately 350 tanks in two panzer divisions. Thus, for the war against the USSR around 3,700 tanks and assault guns were assigned (66 percent of the total number). These were the most powerful and battleworthy tracked vehicles. The remaining tanks, chiefly the light German T-II, T-I and captured ones, made up the two panzer divisions operating in North Africa, as well as the individual panzer units in Norway and France and in the Army Reserve, where they were used for training new replacements.<sup>18</sup>

The introduction of a significant number of new medium tanks made it possible for the German Command to restructure the organization and establishment of the panzer divisions in order to give them greater maneuverability and independence in the course of fighting. In all the formations they left one panzer regiment (with three or two panzer battalions in each), while in the course of the Western Campaign in a majority of divisions there were two panzer regiments. Correspondingly, the number of tanks in a division was reduced from 210-300 to 154-206. As before, there remained two motorized regiments in the division. In order to increase the running range of the tanks, they were given trailers with fuel and for crossing difficult areas of terrain, the tanks were equipped with fascines.<sup>19</sup>

The increased output of automatic small arms made it possible to increase the combat capabilities of the motorized and infantry divisions. In a motorized division, for example, the number of machine pistols rose from 31 to 762 and in an infantry division up to 767.<sup>20</sup>

In possessing data showing the Soviet superiority in tanks, the German Command gave primary attention to saturating its troops with antitank weapons. From the summer of 1940, the mass output of 50-mm antitank cannons (with armor-piercing capability up to 65 mm thick) was organized. The light antitank rifles with a caliber of 7.92 mm and armor-piercing capability up to 20 mm were replaced by heavy ones with a caliber of 28 mm and an armor-piercing capability up to 40 mm. An antitank battalion in an infantry division became motorized. By June 1941, in the German Ground Forces, there were 1,047 50-mm antitank cannons, 14,500 37-mm antitank guns, 25,300 light antitank rifles of the 1938-1939 model, 183,000 antitank rifles of the 1941 model. In comparison with April 1940, the number of antitank guns had increased by 2,674 units and antitank rifles by more than 20,000. In addition to this, they used the Czech antitank rifles with a caliber of 37- and 47-mm a portion of which was mounted on self-propelled carriages. With the aid of these weapons the German military leadership was hoping to fully neutralize Soviet tank operations.<sup>21</sup>

The achieving of a qualitative superiority over the Red Army which had more airplanes than the Wehrmacht could be attained, in the opinion of the German Command, by more advanced equipment of the German Air Force, by saturating the troops with antiaircraft weapons

and organizing close cooperation between aviation and the ground forces. By the beginning of 1941, they had increased the output of the aircraft which had proven effective in the course of the Western Campaign and they had been modified. Great attention was given to preparing the Air Force for hitting the Soviet airfields and for this the capabilities of conducting aerial reconnaissance were broadened. Of the 3,664 combat aircraft assigned by the German Command to support Operation Barbarossa, 623 (that is, 17 percent of the total number) were reconnaissance aircraft.<sup>2</sup> This indicator surpasses by several-fold the analogous one characterizing the Soviet Air Forces. In the aims of strengthening cooperation between the German aviation and ground forces, in December 1940, a decision was taken to establish close reconnaissance squadrons in addition to the existing long-range air reconnaissance units. As a total, 56 close air reconnaissance squadrons were constituted. They were assigned to the ground forces, including 20 squadrons for supporting the armored forces (each panzer division had 6 Hs-126 and Me-110 aircraft) and 36 squadrons for supporting the infantry (for a corps there were 7 Hs-126 and FW-189 aircraft). In addition, the ground forces received 16 long-range reconnaissance squadrons, including 3 newly constituted ones for nighttime reconnaissance. All these squadrons were assigned to support the staffs of the panzer groups, armies and army groups.<sup>23</sup>

In accord with the operational plans, the main task of air reconnaissance was to detect concentrations of enemy tanks and personnel and monitor movements by rail and motor transport. The nighttime air reconnaissance forces were stationed only in those areas where they planned to launch the main thrusts. The long-range reconnaissance squadrons were also to be used for fire correction in shelling the enemy with heavy, particularly rail-mounted artillery.

The ground forces in operational terms had numerous antiaircraft artillery units subordinate to them while in organizational terms this artillery was part of the German Air Force. As a total, the armies and panzer groups participating in Operation Barbarossa were assigned 37 composite antiaircraft artillery battalions and 14 light ones. This provided more effective air defense for the ground forces.<sup>24</sup>

The near- and long-range air reconnaissance forces attached to and operationally subordinate to the ground forces as well as the antiaircraft artillery and the signals troops of the Air Force operated under the leadership of the Air Force representatives on the staffs of the armies and panzer groups and the representatives, in turn, were subordinate to the Air Force commanders on the staffs of the army groups.

At the head of all the Air Force units subordinate to the ground troops was an air general under the commander-in-chief of the ground forces. For maintaining close coordination with the ground forces staffs and for continuously informing the air fleets and air corps about the

ground situation as well as the needs of the ground troops, detachments were organized for liaison of the aviation with the ground forces and these were assigned to the armies, army corps and panzer divisions. All of this ensured the prompt receipt of information and provided an opportunity for the command to respond efficiently to the incoming data.<sup>25</sup>

**Of exceptionally important significance for achieving qualitative superiority of the Wehrmacht over the Soviet forces were the preparations of the Nazi troops carried out from the summer of 1940 for a war against the USSR.** At the beginning of July 1940, the basic areas of troop training were established. The training of recruits was reorganized in order to include the servicemen inducted in the autumn of 1940 in the combat training process. The periods of individual training were extended. In the reserve army they were at least 8 weeks for the rank-and-file and at least 3 months in the operational army. On 7 October 1940, a directive of the Commander-in-Chief of the Ground Forces W. Brauchitsch was issued on the combat training tasks for the 1940-1941 winter. This demanded that the winter training be employed in such a manner that the "troops be ready to carry out any assignment from Hitler." The commanders of the army groups and armies were given instructions to make certain that the combat experience in the Western Campaign was not overestimated and that the troops be ready to "fight with all forces against an equal enemy."<sup>26</sup> Although the directive did not speak openly about war against the USSR, the entire content of the training indicated the preparing of the troops for precisely such a war.

In order to focus the training of the German troops more certainly, having set its main goal of combating the Red Army, in the autumn of 1940, the Section for Studying Foreign Armies East on the basis of Finnish data prepared a review "From the Experience of the Russo-Finnish War" and this, upon the instructions of the commander-in-chief of the ground forces in October was sent out to all inferior staffs down to the division, inclusively. The review generalized the tactics of the Soviet troops on the offensive and defensive, it gave specific examples of their actions and assessed them. In particular, attention was drawn to the ability of the Soviet servicemen to quickly and securely dig in and to the fact that after this it was very difficult to force them out of the occupied positions. It was stated that the Finns for this reason counterattacked the halted enemy immediately, not letting it dig in and this usually brought them success. The report emphasized the tenacity of the Soviet troops on the defensive but at the same time pointed to the shallow depth of the defensive, the poor use of the terrain and poor camouflaging. The uniformity and great length of the Soviet artillery softening-up were also pointed out. This made it possible for the Finns to move out from under the shelling, and then return to the old positions fully ready to repulse the assault. Many shortcomings were also pointed out in the organization of the offensive by the Soviet Command: poor reconnaissance, the give-away noise of tanks moving up to the assembly areas, the lack of precise cooperation and so forth. The Wehrmacht Command proposed that the experience of the

Soviet-Finnish War could be employed with benefit in preparing the German troops for Operation Barbarossa.<sup>27</sup>

In February-April 1941, the Commander-in-Chief of the Ground Forces W. Brauchitsch issued a number of new directives on the questions of the training and indoctrination of the personnel. These demanded that the servicemen be trained "in a spirit of aggressiveness and mercilessness, boldness and decisiveness in action," and work for the "creating in the German soldier of a feeling of superiority over any enemy and unshakable confidence in victory."<sup>28</sup> The directives drew attention to the difficulties of waging war in the interior of the Soviet territory under the conditions of roadlessness and pointed to the necessity of developing the ability of all levels of commanders to quickly take decisions, to organize combat and logistic support for the troops and to be concerned for covering the flanks. They demanded that the troops work out actions for repelling enemy strikes from ambushes and training the troops in the methods of achieving surprise. All the combat arms, formations, units and subunits, including the escort and rear, were ordered to master the use of the existing antitank weapons and learn the methods of combating enemy tanks and antitank weapons. Also indicated was the need to train the command personnel and troops in using a limited number of maps and the obsolete data plotted on them. On 28 May, a directive was issued demanding that the experience of the German troops in the Balkan Campaign be employed in the course of combat training.

**Particular attention was paid to ensuring flexibility and efficiency in troop command and the readiness of the commanders to take a decision without waiting for written orders.** For supervising the course of troop training and the preparations for Operation Barbarossa, Brauchitsch called in Lt Gen E. Muller, the former quartermaster general on the General Staff, and gave him "special powers."<sup>29</sup>

Upon instructions of Brauchitsch, the infantry subunits, units and formations were trained in advancing as shock groups ("wedges"). With such a method of fighting, the most effective was fire from weapons supporting the infantry (infantry guns, mortars, medium machine guns, antitank rifles, cannons and so forth) with the fire carried out in the spaces between the advancing assault groups.<sup>30</sup>

In training the flight personnel of the Air Force, primary attention was paid to improving the skills of the crews, particularly the new ones, and to their acquiring of combat experience and the skills of organizing navigation support for combat flights to the East. At the beginning of 1941, the Command of the Air Corps in the West was given instructions to cut back operations against England to a degree where the battleworthiness of the flight formations would be fully restored by the start of Operation Barbarossa. From this moment, German aviation made raids basically only against close objectives which had poor air defenses in order to completely avoid losses and at the same time gain

combat experience.<sup>31</sup> The German Command gave a great deal of importance to the operational-tactical training of the officers and generals. For this purpose, various courses were organized and exercises conducted in the units and formations. The numerous command-staff exercises on all levels were an important form of immediate preparation for war against the Soviet Union. They prepared very carefully for them. Their basic task, as was pointed out, for example, in the plan of the 2d Army for the command-staff exercise of 10-13 March 1941, was the "development of the operational thinking of the officers."<sup>32</sup> The General Staff of the Ground Forces in its instructions demanded that in the course of the command-staff exercises and other exercises involving the officers they be taught the ability to conduct reconnaissance, to be constantly concerned with organizing cooperation between the combat arms, adjacent units and aviations, respond quickly to a change in the combat situation, rationally utilize all available forces and prepare ahead of time for combating enemy tanks and aviation.

A special place was given to training the officers of the General Staff Service. They had a military academy education and held positions as chiefs of staff and chiefs of operations sections of the formations and field forces as well as certain other positions in the superior staffs. In line with the increase in the operational army and the establishing of new staffs of the armies, panzer groups, corps and divisions, the demand for officers of this category increased. By 22 June 1941, the German Army had 1,053 positions which should be filled by these officers.<sup>33</sup> By mid-1940, the German Command did not have such a number of officers with an academy education. The General Staff of the Ground Forces took a decision to establish 10-week courses for training staff workers. Upon the order of the Chief of the General Staff F. Halder, the courses began operating on 14 October 1940 under the military academy in Berlin. The most capable officers were chosen for training at them. The task of the courses, in Halder's words, was primarily to "teach the officers reasoned actions under combat conditions in the broadened Great German space." Particular emphasis was put on the need to teach these officers to think on the level of the superior military leadership and to know the conditions and methods of action of the highly mobile mechanized formations.<sup>34</sup>

Each week the students of the courses solved two tactical problems and participated in two command-staff exercises, including at night. Each day, exercises were conducted in organizing reconnaissance, communications, combat, engineer and rear support as well as on other subjects. The Soviet Union and its Armed Forces were studied intensely. The schedule of exercises included such subjects as "Military Geographic Description of Russia," "The Russian Ground Forces," "Military-Political Situation of Russia" and others. A great deal of time was devoted to preparing various staff documents.<sup>35</sup>

By the start of the war against the USSR, there had been four graduating classes from the courses. They had



trained 250 officers of the General Staff. In addition, called in for service were over 100 former officers of this category who had been discharged into the reserves in 1918. The measures taken made it possible for the German Command to maintain the quality of training of the General Staff officers on the former high professional level. However, the limited number of positions which were to be filled by these officers increased the workload on each of them and this told particularly during the war, when losses were inevitable.<sup>36</sup> In the divisions, corps and armies they also established courses which trained combined-arms commanders for carrying out the special tasks of the operational and intelligence sections. The commanders who had been trained in these courses were viewed as a reserve for taking over for the General Staff officers but their professional level was significantly lower.<sup>37</sup>

By 22 June 1941, the German Command had been able to fully provide skilled command personnel for the troops assigned for the attack on the USSR as well as establish the necessary reserve of officers. For example, a reserve of 300 men was prepared for each of the three army groups. The best trained command personnel was sent to the formations which were to fight on the main axes. Thus, in the panzer, motorized and mountain rifle divisions, professional officer comprised 50 percent of the officer personnel, and in the infantry divisions of the 1st, 4th, 11th and 12th waves which had undergone reorganization at the end of 1940 and the beginning of 1941, the figure was 35 percent, and in the remaining divisions around 10 percent. Some 90 percent were reserve officers whose professional training was significantly lower than the professional ones.<sup>38</sup>

**The clearer system of organizing logistic support also contributed to a definite degree to the qualitative improvement of the Nazi troops in preparing for Operation Barbarossa.** In drawing on the experience of the Western Campaign, the German Command concluded that it would be impossible to supply the troops in a war against the USSR through the army rear services directly from German territory. For this reason, it worked out new methods of rear support and this was caused by the enormous expanse of the theater of operations in the East. In particular, representatives of the quartermaster general (the chief of the rear services of the ground forces) were assigned to the staffs of the army groups and these representatives, upon the assignment of the quartermaster general, were to direct supply in the zone of the appropriate army group in cooperation with its staff. The command of the army group was concerned solely with the setting of general tasks for rear support and supervised the allocation of transport and this made it possible for it to devote more time and attention to direct leadership of combat.<sup>39</sup>

In the army groups, supply districts were established headed by a representative of the quartermaster general, while in the armies there were supply areas. In each of the areas, prior to the start of Operation Barbarossa, supplies of all materiel were stockpiled and these should

meet the needs of the troops for 14 days in the event of the absence of transport from the district supply depots. Moreover, there they kept two units of fire of ammunition for all types of army weapons, eight loads of fuel in barrels and two loads in permanent dump containers. There were 20 daily rations of food.<sup>40</sup>

In organizing the transport of materiel, the greatest importance was given to the coordinated use of the transport by the ground forces and Air Force and to using naval forces for supplying the troops via the ports of the Baltic and Black Seas. During the first weeks of Operation Barbarossa, in the opinion of the German Command, transport would be almost completely provided by motor transport. For this reason the freight capacity of the "large transport fleet" (the motor transport regiments and battalions) directly available to the quartermaster general was increased from 20,000 tons to 45,000 tons in comparison with the spring of 1940.<sup>41</sup> The Chief of the General Staff of the Ground Forces F. Halder on 5 May 1941 pointed out that the situation with motor transport in the Wehrmacht "was better than a year ago (before the offensive in the West).... The transport and supply units are completely equipped for carrying out Operation Barbarossa."<sup>42</sup> Along with motor transport, 15,000 animal-drawn carts with drivers were prepared to supply the troops participating in the "Eastern Campaign."<sup>43</sup> The railroad troops were also strengthened and preparations were carried out to refit the Soviet railroad gauge to the European and also to operate the head sections without preliminary altering of the gauges. For this freight motor-operated trolleys were developed and these were supplied to the forward advancing troops. They could pull three freight cars at one time. By the start of the "Eastern Campaign," there were over 170 such trolleys.<sup>44</sup> On the staffs much was done to ensure the ordered use of transport, not to move forward a large amount of transport and keep the highways in Germany and Poland free after the Wehrmacht went over to the offensive.

The German Command endeavored to increase the professional skills among the command personnel of the rear services, particularly on the division—corps level. Exercises and staff games were conducted with the officers of the quartermaster service in studying the organization of supply under the conditions of wide-scale offensive operations with a rapid advance of the troops. Their attention was drawn to the difference in logistic support of the mobile (panzer) and infantry formations. A great deal of time was devoted to working out the calculations for the required amount of supply and transport articles as well as to the problems of employing the occupied territory for supplying the troops.<sup>45</sup>

The military-political leadership of Germany planned to complete all the measures relating to the qualitative improvement of the Wehrmacht by approximately mid-May 1941. In speaking at a meeting of the superior command on 5 December 1940, Hitler, as Franz Halder pointed out, said: "In the spring, we will have a clear



superiority in command personnel, materiel and troops. For the Russians, all this, undoubtedly, will be of lower quality."<sup>46</sup>

**An analysis of the state of the German Armed Forces by the moment of the attack on the USSR indicates that the German Command succeeded in carrying out the basic indicators of the set task.** In qualitative terms, the Wehrmacht became more modern than the year prior to the war with the Soviet Union when it was able to win a quick victory in the Western Campaign. Of course, one must emphasize that its preparations for aggression against the Soviet state were carried out in accord with the notion of a planned "blitzkrieg" against the USSR.

Inevitably, the question arises of whether the USSR military leadership was able to correctly assess the particular features of Wehrmacht preparations in 1940-1941. The development of events at the initial period of the Great Patriotic War indicates that the Soviet Union at that time did not pay proper attention to the qualitative improvement of the Wehrmacht but was basically concerned with counting the number of divisions, other forces and weapons of the possible enemy. For precisely this reason, the strength of the attacks which the Nazi troops unleashed against our nation during the very first days of the war came as a complete surprise for the Soviet Command.

Having focused on a qualitative improvement in the Wehrmacht, the German military-political leadership was able to utilize all the resources available to it in 1940-1941 and at the same time do this more effectively than the Soviet. The USSR leadership, regardless of the fact that from November 1940, the inevitability of war with Germany became completely obvious, continued to carry out its former course of increasing the size of the armed forces and the amount of weapons and military equipment. Even in February 1941, the Soviet government, upon the proposal of the Chief of the Red Army General Staff G.K. Zhukov, adopted a plan to enlarge the ground forces by almost another 100 divisions, although in the developing situation it would have been wiser to man up and convert to a wartime establishment the then existing over 200 divisions and increase their battleworthiness.<sup>47</sup> The result of these measures was a relative weakening of the USSR Armed Forces in comparison with the Wehrmacht and this became known to the Nazi military leadership.

However, in 1939, it still viewed the Red Army as an enemy a clash with which was still undesirable. "The wartime Russian Armed Forces," stated, for example, the Intelligence Summary of the General Staff of the German Ground Forces of 28 January 1939, "in numerical terms represents a gigantic military instrument. The means of combat as a whole are modern. Operational principles are clear and definite."<sup>48</sup> In 1939, to Hitler's question of how things would end if Germany attacked Poland and France and England would come to its aid, the Chief of Staff of the Supreme High Command W. Keitel and the Commander-in-Chief of the Ground

Forces W. Brauchitsch replied that Germany would overrun Poland in a month. Keitel proposed that Germany could then also defeat France and England. Hitler went on to ask what would happen if the Soviet Union also acted against Germany. Brauchitsch replied: "Germany would be defeated."<sup>49</sup>

At the beginning of 1941, the German military leadership had already noted the weakness of the USSR Armed Forces and considered their rapid defeat possible. This was mentioned in a secret report on the condition of the Red Army prepared by the Intelligence Section of the General Staff of the German Ground Forces on 15 January 1941: "In line with the 'purge' which followed the execution of Tukhachevskiy and a large group of generals in the summer of 1937 and with its victims being 60-70 percent of the senior leadership having partially war experience, the leadership 'of the superior military level' (from the high command to the army command) has a very insignificant number of outstanding individuals.... Younger and less experienced individuals have replaced the repressed ones. A predominant majority of the current higher command personnel has not mastered the methods and experience of leading large troop formations. They cannot escape from routine and will be impeded in carrying out bold decisions. The senior and junior command personnel (from the corps commander to the lieutenant, inclusively), according to the available data, also have very major shortcomings."<sup>50</sup> The report pointed out that since the end of 1939, the Soviet leadership had been taking measures to strengthen the Red Army. "The Armed Forces, particularly after the experience gained in the Finnish War," it pointed out, "are undergoing changes. From the Bolshevik passion for conducting gigantic maneuvers and exercises, they are returning to painstaking work in the individual training of the officer and soldier.... However, under the conditions of Russia the positive experience of the new methods can be felt only several years later if not decades.... Such character traits of the Russian people as inertia, stagnation, the fear of taking a decision and avoidance of responsibility continue to remain."<sup>51</sup>

The given facts show that the qualitative and not quantitative superiority of the Nazi troops over the Soviet ones was the decisive factor for their success in the initial period of the Great Patriotic War. The Red Army, having increased its overall size by 2.8-fold from 1 September 1939, was not far inferior to the Wehrmacht in this.<sup>52</sup> In the first strategic echelon, the number of armed forces of Germany and the Soviet Union was approximately equal. Superiority in aircraft and tanks was on the side of the USSR. Even in terms of the quantity of the new heavy and medium tanks, the Soviet troops surpassed the Nazi ones. The difference was that our forces were spread to a significant depth (200-250 km), while the Nazi troops had been moved up directly to the Soviet frontier and concentrated on several main axes, where in certain sectors they were able to achieve a 5- or 6-fold superiority over the Soviet troops.

The shortcomings in the quality state of the Soviet Army were the prime reason for its setbacks in the initial period of the war. The losses of our troops during this period are also explained by one of these factors.

An analysis of the oversights of the Soviet military leadership in assessing the state of the probable enemy's armed forces and in preparing its own army on the eve of the Great Patriotic War leads one to the conclusion that under the conditions of the military danger persisting in the world, it is important to have not a larger sized army but one that is more advanced in qualitative terms.

#### Footnotes

1. See: "Velikaya Otechestvennaya voyna Sovetskogo Soyuzu 1941-1945: Kratkaya istoriya" [The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union of 1941-1945: Concise History], Moscow, Voenizdat, 3d Edition, 1984, p 35; "Vtoraya mirovaya voyna: Kratkaya istoriya" [World War II: Concise History], Moscow, Nauka, 1984, p 120.
2. Militararchiv der DDR, WF-10/21797, Bl. 794-796.
3. "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny 1939-1945" [History of World War II of 1939-1945], Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol 4, 1975, p 13.
4. See: B. Muller-Hillebrand, "Sukhoputnaya armiya Germanii 1939-1945" [The German Land Army 1939-1945], Moscow, Izd-vo Inostr. Lit., Vol II, 1958, translated from the German, pp 53, 137, 140.
5. "Das Deutsche Reich und der Zweite Weltkrieg," Stuttgart, 1983, Vol 4, p 260.
6. B. Muller-Hillebrand, op. cit., p 82.
7. Ibid., pp 53, 105, 152.
8. Ibid., p 239.
9. Ibid., pp 105, 210-212.
10. "Das Deutsche Reich....," Vol 4, p 261.
11. V. Muller-Hillebrand, op. cit., p 104.
12. Ibid., p 101.
13. Ibid., pp 47, 138-139; "Das Deutsche Reich....," Vol 4, p 269.
14. B. Muller-Hillebrand, op. cit., pp 151, 168-170, 215.
15. Ibid., pp 170-178, 215-219.
16. F. Hahn, "Waffen und Geheimwaffen des deutschen Heeres: 1933-1945," Koblenz, 1986, p 187.
17. "Das Deutsche Reich....," Vol 4, p 185.
18. B. Muller-Hillebrand, op. cit., p 144.
19. Ibid., pp 194-197, 248-257; H. Guderian, "Tanki—ppered!" [Tanks—Forward!], translated from the German, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1957, p 28.
20. "Voyevyye deystviya Sovetskoy Armii v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne 1941-1945: Kratkiy voyenno-istoricheskiy ocherk" [Combat Operations of the Soviet Army in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945: Concise Military History Essay], Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol 1, 1958, pp 358, 362.
21. B. Muller-Hillebrand, op. cit., p 147.
22. "Das Deutsche Reich....," Vol 4, p 313.
23. Ibid., p 303.
24. Militararchiv der DDR, WF-10/2829, Bl. 850.
25. "Das Deutsche Reich....," Vol 4, pp 302-304.
26. "Fall Barbarossa: Dokumente zur Vorbereitung der faschistischen Wehrmacht auf die Agression gegen die Sowjetunion (1940-1941)," Berlin 1970, pp 239-241.
27. Militararchiv der DDR, WF-03/5669, Bl. 703-712.
28. "Das Deutsche Reich....," Vol 4, p 266.
29. Ibid., pp 266-267.
30. F. Halder, "Voyennyy dnevnik" [Military Diary], Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol II, 1969, translated from the German, pp 178-179.
31. "Das Deutsche Reich....," Vol 4, pp 278-279.
32. Militararchiv der DDR, WF-03/24215, Bl. 713-714, 833-836.
33. "Das Deutsche Reich....," Vol 4, p 265.
34. Ibid., pp 265-266.
35. Militararchiv der DDR, WF-03/24215, Bl. 4, p 265.
36. B. Muller-Hillebrand, op. cit., pp 140-141.
37. "Das Deutsche Reich....," Vol 4, p 265.
38. Ibid., p 271.
39. Ibid., pp 248-249.
40. Ibid., pp 249, 252.
41. B. Muller-Hillebrand, op. cit., pp 107-108.
42. F. Halder, op. cit., p 502.
43. Ibid., p 417.
44. B. Muller-Hillebrand, op. cit., p 108.
45. "Das Deutsche Reich....," Vol 4, pp 247-249.
46. F. Halder, op. cit., p 282.
47. "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy....," Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol 3, 1974, pp 412-420.
48. Quoted in: L. Bezymenskiy, "Osobaya papka 'Barbarossa'" [The Special "Barbarossa" File], Moscow, Izd-vo APN, 1972, p 95.

49. V.Ya. Sipols, "Diplomatische borba nakanune vtoroy mirovoy voyny" [The Diplomatic Struggle on the Eve of World War II], Moscow, Mezhdunarodnyy Otnosheniya, 1979, p 273.

50. Militararchiv der DDR, WF-10/21797, Bl. 793.

51. Ibid., Bl. 801-803.

52. "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy....," Vol III, p 441.

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### Russian Clandestine Intelligence 1902-1905

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[Article, published under the heading "Scientific Papers and Information," by I.V. Derevyanko: "Russian Clandestine Intelligence in 1902-1905"]

[Text] At the start of the 20th Century, Russian intelligence basically employed information gained by military agents (attaches). Certain intelligence data were also provided to the military department by diplomats, officials at the ministry of finances and naval attaches. During the described period, the Russian intelligence service did not have a precise organization and it was run unsystematically and without a general program. The border districts had their own intelligence departments and often did not consider it necessary to share the secured information with the High Staff.<sup>1</sup>

Prior to 1 March 1903, data on the military potential of foreign states was kept in the Statistical Department of the Quartermaster General Unit of the Main Staff and then in the Seventh Department of the Statistical Section of the Second Quartermaster General of the Main Staff (see the Order on the Military Department No. 133 of 1903).

The activities of the intelligence bodies were negatively influenced by the shortage of financial allocations. Prior to the war with Japan, the Main Staff granted 56,950 rubles for the needs of secret intelligence annually and from 4,000 to 12,000 rubles for each military district. Only the Caucasus Military District on a personal arrangement was annually granted a total of 56,890 rubles for maintaining secret agents in Asiatic Turkey.<sup>2</sup> The Military Statistical Section was allocated around 1,000 rubles a year for intelligence requirements. At the same time, Japan, in preparing for a war against Russia, spent 12 million gold rubles on preparing secret agents.

The officers of the General Staff, from whom military agents and the adjutants of the intelligence departments were appointed, were incompetent in the area of clandestine intelligence. Count A.A. Ignatyev, who worked at one time in the intelligence department of the Staff of the Manchurian Army, recalled: "In the academy we were not even acquainted with secret intelligence. This simply was not even part of the teaching program and was even considered a 'dirty' matter which should be the concern of police spies dressed up as policemen as well as other

disreputable individuals. For this reason I was completely powerless when I collided with reality."<sup>3</sup>

The work of Russian intelligence in the Far Eastern countries was based exclusively on the activities of legal military agents who were naturally under the constant supervision of Japanese counterintelligence. In 1902, the command of the Amur Military District turned to the Main Staff with a petition to establish in Japan, Korea and China a network of secret agents from the local inhabitants and foreigners but this was turned down.

Reliable contacts were not organized between the military agents and their relationships with the nearby military staffs depended upon personal relationships. Thus, the agent in Tienjing sent the staff of the Amur Military District information which was rather valuable and reliable, the reports from Shanghai were of a random sort while they were almost not received from Japan and Korea. The agent in Japan, Col B.P. Vannovskiy, in 1901, sent just seven reports and from Col I.I. Strelbitskiy in Korea, just three and these contained information on secondary matters. For this reason, in February 1902, the Quartermaster General demanded that they submit reports more frequently and, at the same time, proposed that they answer a number of specific questions on the state of the Japanese Armed Forces.<sup>4</sup> They could not handle this assignment, and on 4 July they were informed that they had been dismissed. Subsequent to this, the Quartermaster General, Maj Gen Ya.G. Zhilinskiy, sent I.I. Strelbitskiy and B.P. Vannovskiy coded telegrams where he ordered them within a 6-month period to draw up military strategic descriptions of Japan and Korea, promising that "depending upon the execution of the descriptive work, the defense minister will make an assessment of the rights...to further service promotion."<sup>5</sup> The military agents did not carry out the assignment and at the beginning of 1903, they were replaced: B.P. Vannovskiy by Lt Col V.K. Samoylov and I.I. Strelbitskiy by Lt Col L.R. von Raaben and these began working more actively. However, the changing of agents solved only a part of the problem. For completely solving it, it was essential to set up a network of secret agents and train agents who knew the local languages (particularly Japanese). As of then the military agents had been forced to basically be satisfied with the data of official statistics and random information from not very reliable sources.

A network of secret agents did not exist in the Far Eastern countries until the very start of the Russo-Japanese War. An exception was Korea where at the end of 1903, Lt Col L.R. von Raaben recruited a number of secret informers, including a palace aide, the chief of the junker school and even the chief of the military chancellor of the Korean emperor.<sup>6</sup> The activities of the military agent in Japan, Col V.K. Samoylov, came down to turning over to the Main Staff only that information which was fed to him by the Japanese military department. The Japanese consciously understated data on the size of their army so that Russia by the start of the war would not be able to move the required number of troops to the Far East. Thus, according to the information received by the Russian Defense Ministry in

1903, the maximum size of the Japanese Army in wartime would be 372,205 men (together with the reserve and territorial units).<sup>7</sup> Actually, Japan had under arms over a million soldiers and officers during the war.

In 1911, a prominent specialist in the area of clandestine intelligence, V. Klembovskiy, wrote: "We did not know the Japanese, we considered their army weak and poorly prepared, we thought we could deal with it easily and quickly and...we suffered a complete defeat."<sup>8</sup> During the first days of the war, the shortcomings of peacetime intelligence began to be clearly felt. For example, by 1 April 1904 (the day of the landing of the Japanese Army on the continent), the Russian Command did not have any definite data on the place of the landing, and the incoming information was very contradictory. The incompleteness of information on the enemy's armed forces forced the command to become acquainted with the organization of the Japanese Army but only after the war had started.

For the sake of justice, it must be pointed out that at times Russian intelligence was able to conduct successful operations. Thus, several weeks prior to the attack by the Japanese Navy on the Port Arthur Squadron, Russian intelligence officers had secured a copy of the code (cipher) book which the Japanese embassy in the Hague used to talk with its government. Unfortunately, such instances were very rare.

With the outbreak of war, the organization of intelligence in the Far Eastern countries and in the theater of operations was entrusted to the command of the Manchurian Army. Reports from foreign agents went directly to the staff of the commander-in-chief (up to October 1904, to the staff of the governor in the Far East). However, at first the officials of the MID [Ministry of Foreign Affairs] and agents from certain European countries continued to send their reports initially to St. Petersburg, thereby forcing the command of the operational army to request the intelligence data from the defense ministry. Since the activities of legal agents in Japan became impossible with the start of hostilities, the staffs of the governor and the Manchurian Army for an extended time did not receive any accurate information and had to be content with random data, largely rumors, coming from the local population.

In the spring of 1904, the overall organization of intelligence in depth in the Far Eastern countries was assigned to the major general of the General Staff, V.A. Kosagovskiy, with the appointed officers of the General Staff as well as the line officer at the intelligence department and a translator of European languages being made available to him. From the very outset, V.A. Kosagovskiy had serious problems with the Quartermaster General of the Manchurian Army, Maj Gen V.I. Kharkevich. V.A. Kosagovskiy recalled: "Kharkevich not only did not provide me with a single capable officer from the General Staff, but also tripped me up everywhere, undermining my prestige and turning Kuropatkin, Sakharov and generally the entire staff against me. He brought me

to such a state of nervous exasperation that I was ready to strangle Kharkevich."<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, something was done: at the end of April 1904, three secret agents (foreign subjects) were sent to Japan and Korea and they provided the staff with information by code via Europe. Other agents in Japan (obviously sent somewhat later) dispatched their reports via China.<sup>10</sup> In the documents of the military department, they figure under the names: "Bale," "Eshar," "Colins," "Dori" and so forth. Assigned to certain military attaches and diplomats, they passed on through them information and received remuneration. Thus, the secret agent in Yokohama "Bale" was in contact with the military attaché in Tienjing, Col F.Ye. Ogorodnikov, "Dori" with the military agent in Paris, Col V.P. Lazarev, and so forth. The Russian subject, the Korean Kim, who worked at the Russian Mission was appointed to Seoul and he was assigned to establish continuous contact with the local authorities and organize the work of the secret agents.<sup>11</sup> The data secured by the agents in Japan and Korea largely concerned the organizational and rear work of the Japanese Armies, they were received at the staff of the commander-in-chief by a circuitous route (via China or Europe) and were almost always out of date. In 1905, after the Battle of Mukden, the Japanese succeeded in capturing a portion of the staff baggage train with the files of the intelligence department and this compromised the situation of certain Russian secret agents in Japan and they had to be recalled.

Leadership of intelligence directly in the theater of operations was carried out by the intelligence department of the Directorate of the Quartermaster General of the Staff of the Manchurian Army. It directed clandestine (secret) and military intelligence. This department compiled summaries about the enemy irregularly and only for the superior command. Prior to 26 October 1904, the staffs of the formations and units (divisions, corps, detachments and so forth) did not receive any official notifications from the army staff and were forced to be content with partial information from their own military intelligence.

After the splitting of the Manchurian troops into three armies, an intelligence department was organized under each of these. In formal terms, the activities of these departments were brought together by the staff of the commander-in-chief, however in practice there was no cooperation, if one does not count the exchange of summaries which were not marked by completeness and reliability. There were instances when they provided documents showing what was repudiated on the next day in documents. Moreover, the staff of the Amur Military District and the staff of the troop rear services of the Far East also had their own intelligence departments. Clandestine intelligence was also carried out by the staffs of the corps and other troop units. Thus, in the theater of operations (as at the beginning of the war) a clear organization of intelligence and general leadership of it were lacking.

During the period of the Russo-Japanese War there was no system whatsoever for training secret agents from the

local population. Randomly recruited agents received a salary or a single fee for each executed assignment. Their permanent salary fluctuated as an average from 60 to 120 rubles a month, while the individual remunerations, as a rule, did not exceed 25 rubles. The agents recruited among the Chinese population were extremely unreliable. Moreover, their recruitment was impeded by the cruelty of Japanese counterintelligence (Chinese suspected of espionage were buried alive by the Japanese). Many spies frightened by Japanese counterintelligence did not even try to make their way into the enemy rear and rather questioned Chinese arriving from the south or gained information from letters received from there. Often the spies delivered completely made-up data.

It must be pointed out that the leaders of Russian intelligence virtually made no use of such a cruel but effective means of guaranteeing the reliability of the agents (incidentally, this was widely used by the Japanese) as holding relatives of the spy as hostages. The absence of any guarantees as to the conscientiousness and reliability of the agents had a pernicious effect on employing the results of the clandestine intelligence. The staffs slowed down and waited for documentary confirmation which was often late since documents or prisoners were very rarely captured.<sup>12</sup>

However, it cannot be said that there were no persons among the local population who were ready to collaborate with Russian intelligence. Many local merchants and highly-placed officials took an extremely hostile attitude toward the Japanese. Some of them who had lost their kin during the Japanese-Chinese War of 1894-1895 themselves offered their services. Representatives of a number of commercial firms the interests of which were closely intertwined with the interests of Russian capital in the Far East were also ready to assist the Russian troops energetically. However, their services were not used due to the limited nature of the financial assets allocated at the start of the war to the staff of the Manchurian Army for organizing clandestine intelligence.

It must also be pointed out that sometimes volunteers from the Russian soldier became spies. At one time, a private from the 284th Chembar Regiment, Vasilii Ryabov, became well known. In September 1904, he, dressed as a Chinese peasant, was sent into the enemy rear. On 14 September he was captured by the Japanese and executed. Through truce negotiators they turned over to the Russian Command a letter which was later published by many newspapers and which described the feat of Pvt Ryabov who showed exceptional courage when facing death.

An instance of the recruiting of a Japanese agent is also known. He was a certain Gidis, by nationality, a Portuguese. He was operating in the rear of the Russian troops as a correspondent for an English newspaper. Arrested by the lieutenant, Count A. Stenbok-Fermor, Gidis was brought for interrogation before the Capt of the General Staff, Count A.A. Ignatyev, who at that time was working

in the intelligence department of the staff of the Manchurian Army (the summer of 1904). A.A. Ignatyev was able to win over Gidis and feed through him disinformation to the Japanese Command. Some time later, the intelligence department of the Manchurian Army received from Gidis very valuable information on the disposition of the Japanese Army. Subsequently, Gidis worked under the Russian attache in Tienjing, Col F.Ye. Ogorodnikov. However, in the winter of 1905, he was discovered by the Japanese and executed.

After the unsuccessful Mukden Battle for the Russian Army, virtually all the Chinese agents were revealed and it was very difficult to recruit new ones. The scattered and contradictory reports of the remaining ones provided virtually nothing and could serve only as poor confirmation of the data of military intelligence. After Mukden, clandestine intelligence had, in essence, to be reorganized from scratch. And in the last period of the war, when the army was dug in on the Sipinggai positions, measures were taken to improve it. However, these came down merely to more systematized leadership over the spies and not to eliminating the fundamental shortcomings. The attempts to organize a system of resident agents who would live in the enemy rear was of a sporadic and unsystematic nature.

As a whole, Russian clandestine intelligence in the theater of operations was organized unsatisfactorily and operated ineffectively. Due to the poor organization of intelligence, the Russian Command was constantly confused about the forces and intentions of the enemy and this had a lethal effect upon the elaboration and execution of strategic operations.

In conclusion, one would like to say that the military department drew definite conclusions from the experience of the Russo-Japanese War and undertook measures to improve the intelligence service. In World War I, Russian intelligence was much better organized and operated much more efficiently.

#### Footnotes

1. TsGVIA SSSR [Central State Military History Archives of the USSR], folio 400, inv. 4, file 108, sheet 7; folio 487, inv. 1, file 231, sheet 1.
2. Ibid., folio 487, inv. 1, file 231, sheet 1.
3. A.A. Ignatyev, "50 let v stroyu" [50 Years in Service], Moscow, OGIZ. Gosudarstvennoye Izd-vo Khudozh. Lit., 1948, p 175.
4. TsGVIA, folio 400, inv. 4, file 108, sheet 8.
5. Ibid., sheets 14-15.
6. Ibid., file 319, sheet 18 and verso.
7. Ibid., file 330, sheet 18 and verso.
8. V. Klembovskiy, "Tyanyye razvedki (Voyennoye shpionstvo)" [Secret Intelligences (Military Espionage)], St. Petersburg, 2d Edition, 1911, pp 9-10.



9. TsGVIA, folio 76, inv. 1, file 217, sheet 239 (diary of V.A. Kosagovskiy).

10. "Otchet razvedotdeleniya upravleniya general-kvartirmeystera shtaba 1-y manchurskoy armii" [Report of the Intelligence Department of the Directorate of the Quartermaster General of the Staff of the 1st Manchurian Army], Moscow, 1906, p 44.

11. TsGVIA, folio 487, inv. 1, file 231, sheet 2.

12. "Otchet razvedotdeleniya upravleniya....," pp 33, 82.

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### Work on Prewar Japanese Military Policy Reviewed

00010013i VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL  
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pp 86-87

[Book Review by Col A.S. Savin, doctor of historical sciences, of the work "Krakh strategii 'speloy khurmy'. Voyennaya politika Yaponii v otnoshenii SSSR 1931-1945 gg." [The Collapse of the "Ripe Persimmon" Strategy. Japanese Military Policy Vis-a-Vis the USSR in 1931-1945], by A.A. Koshkin, Moscow, Mysl, 1989, 271 pages]

[Text] In the summer of 1941, when the Soviet troops were fighting heroically against the Nazi Wehrmacht, the government and Imperial Staff of Japan were discussing the question of entering the war against the USSR. The Defense Minister Gen Tojo at one of the sessions proposed making an attack at the moment when the Soviet Union "was like a ripe persimmon ready to fall to the ground."

This proposal was essentially adopted by the superior state body of Japan, the Imperial Conference of 2 July 1941. It adopted a "Program of National Policy" which reiterated the idea: "If the German-Soviet war develops in a direction favorable for the Empire, we, having resorted to armed force, will resolve the northern problem..." (p 97).

The decision of the superior Japanese leadership to attack the USSR in the event of the success of the German troops on the Soviet-German Front was a major violation of the Neutrality Pact concluded by the two countries on 13 April 1941.

However, in the Nation of the Rising Sun there were few who knew about this. The state leaders and the mass information bodies have misinterpreted the content of Soviet-Japanese relations in the past. For this reason, the defending of the historical truth of the past war is an indisputable contribution by the author of the reviewed book written on a sound documentary basis.

For military readers also of interest is the author's analysis of the operational-strategic plans of the Japanese Command as well as the range of measures to prepare Japan for a war against the USSR in the 1930s and in 1941-1943.

In 1941, by the moment of Germany's attack on the Soviet Union, the Japanese General Staff and Defense Ministry had drawn up a secret plan to prepare for conducting offensive operations against the USSR and entitle the "Kan Toku En" ("Special Maneuvers of the Kwantung Army"). The plan provided for the forced movement of troops, weapons and supplies into Manchuria and the concentrating of 26 infantry divisions on three sectors: eastern (19 divisions), northern (3 divisions) and western (4 divisions).

In the first stage of the operation, the plan was that the formations of the Kwantung Army advancing on the Ussuri Axis would defeat the Soviet troops in the Maritime Province, in the second stage capture Vladivostok, Khabarovsk, and then begin defeating our troops on the northern and western sectors.

In this document particular attention was paid to the extensive employment of aviation which was to destroy the Soviet Air Forces in the Far East prior to the start of the operation. "The task was set," the reviewed work points out, "of reaching the Baykal in 6 months and concluding the war" (p 102). However, the course of the Soviet-German War did not make it possible to conclude that the "persimmon had ripened," that is, that the Red Army was on the brink of defeat and conditions had arisen for Japan's entry into the war. The 5th Section of the Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff at the beginning of August concluded: "Even if the Red Army this year abandons Moscow, it will not surrender.... The further development of the war will not be advantageous for the German side" (p 122).

Referring to the intelligence conclusions, the superior Japanese military-political leadership took a decision to launch the first strike to the south, having also strengthened preparations for an attack on the USSR. This is confirmed by a document, excerpts of which are found in the book of A.A. Koshkin. In the Directive of Imperial Headquarters No. 1048 of 3 December 1941, the Kwantung Army is ordered "to intensify preparations for operations against Russia. Be ready to commence hostilities in the spring of 1942" (p 141).

The author also gives irrefutable proof that in the summer of 1942 and in 1943, the Japanese Command continued to prepare intensely for an attack on the USSR. According to the plan of "Operation No. 51" the offensive in the summer of 1942 would involve up to 30 infantry divisions and the 1st Tank Army with 3 tank divisions (p 146).

The plans for operations against the Soviet troops in the Far East in 1943 envisaged an offensive from the area of Manchuria with the main forces (17 infantry divisions) to the east and with a portion of the forces (5 infantry and 2 tank divisions) to the north (p 147).

The victory of the Red Army over the Nazi Wehrmacht at Kursk buried the hopes of the Japanese Command for successful aggression against the Soviet Union. The "persimmon" had not ripened.

However, the aggressive plans against the USSR and the facts of preparing an attack on our state indicate the far from blameless actions of the Japanese militarists. The latter really aided Nazi Germany in the war against the Soviet Union, forcing the USSR to keep in the East large troop groupings which were extremely essential at that time in the West.

The author's research is solid. It is backed up by Japanese documents given in the Appendix. Among these of particular interest are the minutes of the sessions of the Coordinating Committee of the Government and the Imperial Staff of Japan where the most important questions of defense policy were discussed.

The scientific work carried out by A.A. Koshkin merits an affirmative assessment, however, unfortunately, it contains certain inaccuracies and omissions. The author, for example, calls the General Staff of the Ground Forces the only "general staff" while during that period in the Japanese Armed Forces there still was a Naval General Staff (pp 101, 108). In analyzing the plan of "Operation No. 51," he does not indicate on what axis they planned to employ the 1st Tank Army (p 146).

Nevertheless, we would repeat that, regardless of the designated shortcomings, the book by A.A. Koshkin is of significant interest.

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### Wife's Biography of Blyukher

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pp 88-94

[Article, published under the heading "Remembrances of the Personal," by Glafira Blyukher: "Six Years With Vasiliy Konstantinovich Blyukher"; continuation of serial, for previous installments see this journal, Nos 3, 4, 1989]

[Text] During the years of our life together, Vasiliy Konstantinovich often recalled his work in China, where he had been sent in October 1924 by the Soviet government upon the request of Sun Yat-sen, the first president of the Chinese Republic. He traveled without his family. In China, he had numerous aliases such as Uralskiy, Galin and so forth.<sup>1</sup>

Working in China at that time were A.Ya. Lapin (subsequently, the chief of the OKDVA [Special Red Banner Far Eastern Army] Air Forces), Tyer Tairov (alias "Ter-uni"), M.V. Sangurskiy (subsequently, a member of the OKDVA Revolutionary Military Council and chief of staff), A.I. Yegorov (who in 1935 became one of the first five marshals of the Soviet Union), A.I. Cherepanov, M.M. Borodin-Gruzenberg (he was the political advisor of the Kuomintang Party and the democratic government in Canton established by Sun Yat-sen), O.Yu. Schmidt, a participant and leader of the historic Moscow-Peking flight in 1925 as well as other of our comrades.

V.K. Blyukher was the Chief Military Advisor of the People's Revolutionary Army. He traveled to Canton on a steamship. He described how immediately difficulties appeared relating to etiquette. For example, each person was assigned a place at the table and this was shown by special placecards with the names. For breakfast, lunch and dinner it was required to be in the appropriate dress. Each table setting consisted of a great number of knives and forks which you had to know how to use. At first, Vasiliy Konstantinovich had a hard time with all of this, although he had received a complete "instruction session" before departure. He watched what the other passengers did. The captain of the steamship was the first to sit down at the table and only then did the invited persons take their seats.

In Canton, he stayed at a hotel which offered him a very surprising service. The same bottle of wine, for example, or box of cigars was offered to the purchaser until they were all used up and this could last for several days. On the table were bowls or dishes with clean water for washing your fingers after eating fruit. One comrade who did not know about this tried to drink the water, my husband related laughingly....

Once at home, looking at photographs from the Chinese period, Vasiliy Konstantinovich stopped at two of them. In one was a group of our advisors along with V.K. Blyukher and Chiang Kai-shek who was walking at the head toward the parade reviewing stand and somewhat distant from the others. In the second photograph, there was also a group of our advisors in a combat situation, but Chiang Kai-shek stood further off to the rear, close to some wall.

"He would pay a great deal now to get back these photographs," said Vasiliy Konstantinovich, grinning, and explained the episodes related to the photographs being looked at.

Everywhere Vasiliy Konstantinovich was accompanied by a personal translator, Emmanuil Moiseyevich Abramson, later the scientific secretary of the Scientific Research Institute imeni Sun Yat-sen and M.Ya. Gmira was the aide.

On 23 July 1925, V.K. Blyukher left for the USSR for medical treatment.

Vasiliy Konstantinovich was appointed a second time to work in China in May 1926. N.I. Konchits with his wife and two children traveled with him. V.K. Blyukher assumed the alias of Galin (from the name of his wife Galina Pavlovna) Zoy (from the name of his daughter Zoya) Vsevolodovich (from the name of his elder son) as a sign of reconciliation after the official dissolving of the marriage which occurred in July 1924.<sup>2</sup> This was told me by the Konchitses with whom I spent a long time in Moscow after the rehabilitation of my husband and our family.

According to the stories of N.I. Konchits (he served in China until the end of 1926), when the "Northern Campaign" commenced at the end of November 1926,

the men set off for the north, the families (seven persons) left for Vladivostok, Yelena Saturninovna Konchits stayed at a private apartment and Galina Pavlovna with her children in the Golden Horn Hotel. The women were friendly, as before in China. Approximately in mid-1928, Vasilii Konstantinovich sent Galina Pavlovna two letters through the translator Segal in which he announced that he would have a new family (with the typist at the Soviet Consulate in Hankow, G.A. Kolchugina who in 1928 gave birth to the son Vasilii). Galina Pavlovna left for Leningrad where later she married Leonid Vasilyevich Pokrovskiy and, as she told me upon a meeting in the 1930s, was happy....

In my husband's study on a small table lay a rather large album in a stiff dark green binding of reproductions of the work of the female artist Liao Zhongkai, the wife of Liao Zhongkai, who headed the left wing of the Kuomintang and was brutally murdered on 20 August 1925. Vasilii Konstantinovich had been given the album by the artist herself. My husband described how he, having looked through the beautifully executed reproductions with images of various flowers, lions and so forth, expressed to the artist his amazement but also pointed out: "And where is awakened China?" Pointing to the picture of a recumbent lion raised up on its front paws with head erect and open eyes, the artist replied: "Does not the awakened lion speak about the stirring of China?"

"I was completely satisfied with such a reply," recalled Vasilii Konstantinovich.

One time, in the same study, standing by a wall geographic map, Vasilii Konstantinovich described the unusual industriousness of the Chinese. He had seen a sphere made by a Chinese artisan from an entire ivory tusk with the finest delicate carving and within the sphere were numerous small carved other spheres and they all turned around an axis. The master had worked on this sphere, a masterpiece of art!, for 20 years. He also stated that the Chinese, particularly the youth, were attractive being tall, well-built with handsome eyes....

V.K. Blyukher described how difficult it was to help out Fanya Semenovna Borodina after her arrest by the White Guards on the steamship "Pamyat Lenina," how they hid her and changed her appearance after they had been able to promptly get Borodin himself out and he made his escape across the Gobi Desert.

In China there was a custom which bound persons together with almost the same strength as blood ties. This was when two persons drank wine (similar to our "To Brotherhood") with drops of serpent blood poured in it. If such an act had not occurred between Vasilii Konstantinovich and Chiang Kai-shek at a banquet in honor of a major military victory, then Blyukher would scarcely have been able to escape safely from China subsequently. Chiang Kai-shek betrayed people's revolutionary China but he could not betray an ancient custom.

"Within his power was everything to prevent me from leaving China," recalled Vasilii Konstantinovich, "and the situation was most complex." On 12 April 1927, Chiang Kai-shek carried out a coup in Shanghai and then in Nanking and after this all the Russian advisors left China. V.K. Blyukher was one of the last to leave China.

\* \* \*

On 14 August 1932, V.K. Blyukher wrote to me from Borza (Transbaykal areas) from the exercises: "On 18 August, I will be in Chita and that very same evening or morning of the 19th, I will be with you in Molokovka...I am hellishly tired, very ill and my face has become unrecognizable."

And in fact, Vasilii Konstantinovich arrived in Molokovka with inflamed skin on his hands, neck and ear lobes. He suffered from a skin disease called photodermatitis and which was characterized by increased sensitivity of the skin to sunlight. In his opinion, he had been "overburned" by the short ultraviolet rays in China when he was military advisor of Sun Yat-sen.

With the abundance of sunny days in the Far East, this skin disease greatly impeded Blyukher's work, as he spent a great deal of time in the troops, in the field. For this reason in exercises, in maneuvers and generally in traveling in the troops, from 1932 on, Vasilii Konstantinovich was constantly accompanied by a dermatologist physician, later Candidate of Medical Sciences, Fedor Stepanovich Malyshev, and earlier the professor of dermatology and rector of the Far Eastern State Medical Institute, F.A. Kogan.

Even a brief stay in the sun was difficult for Vasilii Konstantinovich and by a special order from the People's Commissariat of Defense, the commander of the OKDVA was permitted to wear a tropical cork helmet with a narrow brim. This illness also introduced restrictions in ordinary life, for example, he could not and did not permit himself to bathe in the sea and rivers and tried to keep in the shade.

From the Memoirs of Doctor F.S. Malyshev,  
7 April 1969, Khabarovsk

"During the first evening of my acquaintance with Vasilii Konstantinovich in his official railroad car (in traveling from Khabarovsk to Chita), he conversed long with me and made an impression as an obliging and widely educated man. Later the beauty of his human qualities were more and more revealed to me and in appearance, too, he was handsome. Over a period of 6 years, I accompanied him on all trips through the Far East and was frequently with him at the apartment or at work. This was essential. After staying in the sun, even briefly, the exposed parts of his skin a painful, itching dermatitis developed.

"The occurrence of the illness was aided by the constant intoxication from centers of chronic infection in scars (after wounds in World War I.—G.B.) and cholecystitis.

"In the autumn of 1933, after hard work in the summertime, he developed an aggravation of a center of infection in the hip joint. The surgeon D.N. Tikhomirov (assisted by M.N. Akhutin and V. Geynats) lanced an abscess the size of a chicken egg filled with pus.

"Milder flare-ups occurred in later years. The shattered hip joint caused a shortening of the leg by 1.5 cm and as a consequence of this his gait was like a waddle...."

At the end of August 1932, we were returning home from the station in the car. Vasiliy Konstantinovich was seated in front with the driver Vasya Zhdanov, listening silently to our talk. What was he thinking about? What was he feeling? Was he happy?

On the first of September, Seva and Nina began their school year. Studies in our medical institute also began that year later than usual, in October, and my plans to study in Moscow or Leningrad had completely collapsed. As I have already said, the institute was located in the building of a former gymnasium [secondary school], and it had been built from the brick of the destroyed "Zhivoy" Cathedral. Now a pharmaceutical faculty is located there and the institute itself is in a fine new building which was specially built not far from Lenin Square.

As before, Anna Vasilyevna [Blyukher's mother] ran the household. She was 64 years old. Given to stoutness, she did not seem tall. Her hair was light brown mixed with gray, combed smoothly back from a part in the middle and gathered in a bun at the back of her neck. She dressed simply and neatly with gathered skirts down to the ankles, blouses most often with three-quarter length sleeves falling freely to the hips. Her head was wrapped with a kerchief knotted under the chin or she had a shawl on her shoulders and her movements and speech were unhurried. Her eyes were dark gray and attentive. She glowed with human warmth and kindness.

In the morning and evening, meals were prepared at home. Vasiliy Konstantinovich ate little and in the morning, as a rule, he drank a glass of strong, unsweetened tea with the glass in a holder without fail. Dinner was brought from the hospital in serving dishes. If food had been prepared at home, the dishes were sent to my "elders," as Vasiliy Konstantinovich called them. The city was short of food.

At the end of October 1932, V.K. Blyukher left for Moscow for medical treatment at the Kremlin Hospital. I remained with the grandmother whom soon thereafter called simply "Granny." Our studies began at the institute. Before the November holiday, Seva, meeting me in the corridor, said:

"I received a telegram from father," and after remaining silent for a moment added:

"And Granny and Nina received one!"

Until that evening I was tortured by the question of why I had not? I was very bitter and kept silent. Granny also

kept silent. After dinner in our dining room we were busy with various things and played records. Everyone was happy but not me. And then the famous "first Red people's joker" Vitaliy Lazarenko began singing:

"My beloved wife Lyudmila, You know what scandal happened? The letter where you asked for money I have still not received!..."

And then homeric laughter.... I could no longer stand this. I went out in the corridor, tears pouring down my face, and was gasping from shame. Granny came up to me, embraced me and said:

"Don't cry, there is no need. Your telegram will come, it will. Go into the bathroom, have a wash with cold water, calm down and then come back. They need not see."

I obeyed. Vitaliy Lazarenko was continuing to laugh without restraint and the children were grinning with him. They played the record over and over again.

And my holiday telegram was at the neighbors on the first floor....

Granny often recalled her life. She very rarely and unwillingly recalled Konstantin Pavlovich, her husband. He remained living in Barshchinka and did not write letters. The father was a hard man and was not fond of his elder son, particularly after he came back from prison. Anna Vasilyevna related that when Vasya was being driven by prison stages from St. Petersburg, his father did not recognize him.

"I hid him in the cellar and when Vasya had to eat, I put my kerchief on him so that passersby would not see in the window when he was eating...."

We did not live long with Granny. After the November holidays she accompanied the children to school and my friend Lida and myself to the institute and she blessed me at the threshold. On that very day she fell ill. She was treated by the physicians from the military hospital, the same who had treated Blyukher: Tikhomirov, Cherevkov, Malyshev and Akhutin. Vasiliy Konstantinovich was in the Kremlin Hospital in Moscow and he was reached there. Diagnoses and advice for treatment were obtained from Moscow. Anna Vasilyevna had peritonitis of the abdominal cavity and she could not be saved. Granny asked us to take care of Nina and she told Nina to obey and love Rafa and that aside from her no one else remained. On the eve of her death she told me:

"How will you live in this foolish life?"

And in the morning on the day of her death, 24 November 1932, she repeated:

"How will you live in this foolish world?"

This was the first loss, the first death of a person near and dear to me and it was very terrible....

Kremlin Hospital,  
28 November 1932



"My beloved, own Rafushka. Only now have I so sharply felt that great loss which the death of my mother has brought me," my husband wrote me. "Relations between people sometimes develop strangely. A close person lives nearby and you walk past without noticing him and you feel the pain of loss only when this person is no longer there. This is what happened with me for I lost not only my mother but also a good, caring comrade in life. But sadness does not help all the more as I have not lost the hope that in you, my beloved, I will find not only a beloved wife but also a close, dear, sensitive comrade in life and work. I will work and strive for this."

In this same letter, V.K. Blyukher wrote: "...On this trip to Moscow, as never before, I was convinced that I had much fewer real friends than I thought and there have turned out to be immeasurably more enemies than I reckoned. I am sick of the unpleasantnesses in Moscow and these have been numerous both official and personal and the latter have also involved you. Each of my large and small enemies has done his bit to add a drop of dirt and the result is a rather stinking bouquet. I cannot understand why such humans are needed. What is this: miscomprehension or envy? Obviously, a bit of both."

"Don't understand these lines as despondency, no the dirty lies I can avoid and I spit on them, on serious questions I rebuff them but the enveloping slander, the complaints and, forgive me for the bluntness, the stench are felt at every step. Well, let us spit on this and the devil take it."

"In the evening of the 24th, there was a medical consultation. Here is the resume: although my heart is fatigued, it is healthy, lungs and kidneys in order, blood pressure elevated to 130 and an indicator of insipient arteriosclerosis and metabolism produces either a sharp rise or an equally sharp decline. They will make a third test. My nervous system was found to be in an exceptionally shattered state with consequences for my eyes and vision. Hemoglobin in the blood is 90 percent and this is a good indicator. My main complaint is the rash on my body and face and this is ascribed to my bowels which produce a constant poisoning of the organism, that is, the same thing I had 5 years ago. Initially, the consultants found an inflammation of the maxillary sinus, but the specialists who examined me denied this. Frankly, I was disappointed with this as this would have most justified my rash and itch on the face. They have prescribed a complex course of month-long treatment requiring my presence in the hospital and I have agreed to this. I will not go abroad, I have neither the desire nor am in the mood. My own mood is deplorable for I am almost convinced that my 'friends' are preparing some major debacle for me."

"All of this has further exacerbated my longing for you and, if you wish me to say it frankly, my fears of losing you. I cannot explain how I get this into my head. I greatly want to see you and if there had not been the misfortune with mother than probably I would insist on your coming here. This would cause a storm of all sorts

of attacks but so what, the main thing is it would be better and easier for me. But it is impossible to do this now."

"At the time of this letter, Shura (the sister of Vasilii Konstantinovich.—G.B.) is already growing accustomed to the loss of our mother and is resting from the trip. Here, in Moscow, she has spoken with me and wants to raise Nina. They have no children and she would like to have at least the niece. I have not given a reply to her having stated that I want to leave Nina with us and that finally there will be time to talk about this. I feel that she now definitely will raise the question of Nina and will try to have Nina come to her. I have thought about this and reached the following conclusion: it will be easier for us to get Nina on her feet as it is easier to give her an education and for this reason it would be better for Nina to remain with us. But it would not be bad for Nina to be with Shura as there they will give her heartfelt affection and concern. For this reason, the decisive word must remain for Nina herself if she wants to go to Shura, then we must agree to this. If Nina chooses our home, then let her remain with us. She will decide and her choice will be decisive.... I would only like that Shura would delay her departure until my return. I would also like that if Nina decides to go with Shura, then she would go with me."

"If Shura waits for my return, then we can settle the question of the organizing of the house upon my arrival, since Shura can look after the children and the household and free you for your studies. If Shura wants to leave earlier and cannot wait for me, then the best thing until my return would be, if you agree, to invite your mother to our apartment as her presence will free you from household concerns and allow you to study. Take care of yourself and your lungs. Have you gotten your winter things ready? Do you have felt boots? If you need something, tell Zakharov and he will get it."

"Greetings to you, my dear and beloved. Greetings to your elders, to the children and brother. Your loving Vasilii."

Anna Vasilyevna Blyukher was buried in the city cemetery. During all this difficult time of the illness of the grandmother, her death and burial, aside from the physicians and close friends, Sergey Adamovich Bergavinov took a particularly caring involvement in our grief and at that time he was the first secretary of the Far Eastern VKP(b) [All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik)] Kraykom. We were also aided by other comrades who were fellow servicemen of Vasilii Konstantinovich, but at that time I still knew virtually no one and was just acquainted with the families of M.V. Sangurskiy, the chief of staff of the OKDVA and A.I. Mezis, the chief of the political directorate. They lived on the first story of our house.

V.K. Blyukher was particularly friendly with Sergey Adamovich and this was reciprocated. They had good professional and human relations, strong in the male sense.



After the fatal year of 1938, I returned to Khabarovsk for the first time 25 years later. I had gone to visit the graves of the grandmother and father as they had been buried side by side (the father had died in 1937), but the cemetery had been moved and the territory built up. I walked in vain through the cemetery and sought in vain. But I was there...but I looked.... And this was joy for the soul...

Kremlin Hospital,  
3 December 1932

"Today Tairov is arriving in Khabarovsk and I am sending with him or an escort this letter and a small parcel: 1) a small patent leather suitcase to replace your worn out checkered one, 2) I have got you a briefcase and although it is so-so, I could not find any better, 3) I bought you perfume, 4) I bought toothbrushes for all of you and the children for the student's bag and, finally, a sweet—that was all I could find. There is no noticeable change in my health and I see no improvement. Yesterday, the Central Committee ruled that I was to be sent to Germany, to Berlin, for consultation and establishing a diagnosis.

"It will take 5 days to draw up the documents and I will then leave, one must think, on 8 December. I will spend 15-20 days in Germany and if I can I will come back sooner. I will be treated in Moscow, in the same hospital. I will arrive in Khabarovsk probably not before the end of the month. Although my mood is beginning to get better, it is still foul. I am concerned by the questions related to warm winter clothing for you. Do you have everything? I am not certain that Shura will remain in Khabarovsk until my return and will probably rush off to Leningrad. For this reason, I have thought again on what we should do with Nina and have concluded that we should agree with Shura. Nina will do well with Shura and we can help with her education. I am particularly concerned for you, how do you feel in this new situation and how can you combine the role of housewife and student at an institute? I am afraid that you will be worn out, my beloved. Don't be angry with me for the existing situation. I will come, I will make an effort and be able to smooth things out."

Kremlin Hospital,  
6 December 1932

"...I will go find the book tomorrow myself or instruct Krysko to find it. Tomorrow in one day I should draw up the documents planning to leave for Berlin on the 8th or at the outside the 9th. For a number of reasons they have forbidden me to travel via Poland and for this reason I will travel round-about via Lithuania, Latvia, the Danzig Corridor and then across Prussia. My mood in recent days has again deteriorated sharply. I feel awful and have a hard time getting ahold of myself and I long for you, particularly after your letter where you timidly blame me for not writing you often. Believe me, Grafa, that it is not a reticence to write you but rather this terrible mood which has prevented me from being correct. There is this dull reticence to do anything whatsoever. Don't be angry. In the future I will be better. I wish you successful studies and health. Heartfelt greetings, my dear. I kiss you. Your Vas.

"Greetings to Shura, kiss Seva and Ninochka for me. Greetings to your elders and brother. Vas."

In one of the letters to me, there was also a letter for Seva and Nina:

"I will arrive home in the month of January. Until my arrival I beg that both of you study well as this will bring you great benefit in life when you will be adults. I beg you not to misbehave, to conduct yourselves well, both in school and at home, as well as on the street when you go out for a walk.

"I love you both and am certain that you will carry out my request. Get along well with Grafa, she is good and kind. She will help you with your lessons and you will be good and love her. Write me letters, Grafa knows my address and will tell you where to send the letters. I send you my greetings and kiss you both affectionately. Your Papa, Vasya.

"I myself have been lying for 4 days in the hospital."

While awaiting the arrival of husband and father, we lived three together as we knew how, we solved our school and domestic problems and wrote letters, we waited for letters, we grew closer together and even did our "lessons" together at a single table in the dining room. We ran off to see my parents at Orlovo Field. And we waited....

Shura (Aleksandra Konstantinovna Blyukher-Pyatibratova) did not wait for the arrival of her brother and on 6 December left with Nina for Leningrad. I honestly carried out my husband's request and did not influence the decision by Nina herself to choose with whom she wanted to live. Nina cried and rushed about. Shura certainly persuaded her because later Nina was calmer but in saying farewell, she again cried and tried to stay.

Vasiliy Konstantinovich arrived in January 1933, as he has promised in his letters. Our family resumed its full life. My husband described the trip to Berlin where he had gone under the alias of Vsevolod Vasilyevich Sibirtsev. The trip did not bring any noticeable results, a precise diagnosis was not established and for this reason the treatment would basically be a general one which the physicians at the military hospital had carried out previously.

Vasiliy Konstantinovich worked a great deal and his capacity to work was amazing. He could work intensely for more than 24 hours. He used to say: "Wake me in 40 minutes without fail." And no matter how hard it was to awaken him—he slept soundly—he still got up and a little later would say: "Now, I feel good. Wide awake." And again back to work.

On a spring day, we had a long heart-to-heart conversation. In it for the first time my husband told me in detail about his personal life. In skipping forward, let me say that later on, some 10 years without him, life did not repudiate a single argument, a single fact of what he said

then, just as everything has remained that Vasilii Konstantinovich said and did during all the years we lived together.

It seems to me that M.I. Kazanin, one of the fellow servicemen of V.K. Blyukher, precisely and correctly described the professional and human qualities of my husband, in saying: "The first thing that struck you in meeting Blyukher and which always remained in your mind was, I would say, was his happy appearance and happy manner. Standing before you was a handsome, attractive, very simple and at the same time, very strong and controlled person. Initially, it was impossible to notice in him any specific traits as a worker, a peasant, a soldier or a military leader. One remembers the open look of the gray eyes under the dark, thick brows. There was something of peasant solidness, worker pride, Bolshevik foresight as well as those traits which he received from the better portion of the military environment and together with which he shared trench life, the wounds and the St. George Cross: courage, laconicness, quickness of judgment, unlimited trust in combat comrades and a high sense of duty, honor and his word. From this derived his unswerving uprightness, emphatic punctiliousness and dignity."<sup>3</sup>

I would point out that Vasilii Konstantinovich had blue eyes, in later years steel blue and at times they were a steelish color. Once my husband and I were going through the contents of a large, old hammered trunk with a sloping lid which had belonged to his mother and stood in the corridor of the Khabarovsk apartment and in which various documents and photographs were stored. Picking up a photograph from the 1920s, my husband said:

"Take a look and see how handsome your husband was: round-headed and blue-eyed...."

I did not like the shaved head in the photograph and I said with complete frankness:

"No, no, such a person I would not have fallen in love with."

In that same trunk was a photograph of a deceased tiny first daughter Zoya from the first marriage of Vasilii Konstantinovich with Galina Pavlovna. In April 1922 (according to the old style), their son Vsevolod was born and in June 1923, a daughter whom they also named Zoya in memory of their first child....

Spring had arrived and the happy holiday of May Day was drawing near. On 1 May a military parade was held at which Vasilii Konstantinovich received the oath of the men near the building of the VKP(b) Kraykom. The troops passed in review before V.K. Blyukher along with A.I. Mezis, Tyer Tairov, a member of the OKDVA Revolutionary Military Council, M.V. Kalmykov, corps commissar 1st class, G.M. Krutov, the chairman of the Far Eastern Kray Executive Committee, T.D. Deribas, the chief of the NKVD [People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs] of the Far Eastern Kray and others. Then there was a parade by the civilian population with

banners, portraits of leaders and slogans. The columns passed by the wooden temporary reviewing stand covered in red cloth. There was a holiday mood, it was bright and everyone happy. The day was sunny, and the sky very blue. Everywhere songs could be heard.

After the parade, plans had been made that we would dine in the family of A.I. Mezis, he lived in the right half on the first floor of our building, and then the feast would continue in our apartment on the second floor. I had left the Mezis apartment earlier and was very excited as this was the first time that I would receive guests and play the role of the mistress! My husband encouraged me and asked me not to be excited.

"When need-be, I will suggest and help, just don't get excited," he said.

The evening before, he asked:

"You know, it would be nice to serve real Russian blini served hot. Please make them, they will be good!"

The hot meals had been prepared in the hospital and all the rest we made at home with the housekeeper, Nyura. I, of course, had been given the corresponding "instruction session," previously by my husband and my parents. As luck would have it, when our guests were arriving, something happened at the power plant and the lights in the apartment went out. What should we do? We had small flashlights and I hung them up to provide good light for the tables. It was unexpectedly effective and the guests thought that this lighting had been thought up before. Everyone liked it. The doors communicating between the study, dining room and bedroom were left open.

At that time, there still were none of the requested dishes on the tables and the serving would be easy. Vasilii Konstantinovich arrived with the guests with his eyes smiling and I realized he was content! My fear diminished and declined as easy conversations were struck up. My guests were particularly ecstatic about the hot blini served with sour cream, with melted Russian butter, fish and red salmon caviar. We also had pressed and fine-grained caviar but neither found success with our guests and generally then somehow no importance was paid to this excellent delicacy.

After the meal, they began to dance and sing. In those times, people, in coming together, sang a lot. They split up into groups in different rooms and told stories with laughter flowing freely.

Vasilii Konstantinovich was a hospitable host. He sang and danced with everyone and loved a smart word. When we were dancing together, Terentiy Dmitriyevich Deribas suddenly slipped an arm between us and exclaimed loudly: "Not enough air!" desiring to move us apart. Laughing, Terentiy Dmitriyevich apologized for the liberty, for the joke, but it was a good joke and hence permissible.

Fashionable at that time were the waltz, chiefly "In the Hills of Manchuria," the tango, foxtrot and more rarely the Charleston and everything was played on the gramophone. Everyone did what he wished. We drank predominantly cognac and Darasun mineral water. Before the dessert, Zina Tairova and I covered the tables with pink tablecloths and the fun continued. Our guests left very late, and just two staff commanders (I don't recall their names) could not be dislodged by my husband, they "took shelter" in the study and felt they had some problems to solve. Finally, my husband escorted them downstairs, put them in a car and before it had left came back upstairs. He came in laughing and content.

On a black-painted wooden weapons stack which was in Blyukher's study were rifles, various types of guns and the sword of Vasilii Konstantinovich (from the time of the Civil War), it was small and in a scuffed scabbard. There was also a sword presented in honor of the victory of the OKDVA to its commander by the workers of the Slotousk Plant after the conflict on the Chinese East Railroad. The sword had been brought from the Urals to Khabarovsk by Nazarov, a middle-aged, grey-haired worker with a broad and thick beard. The sword was long, in a dark scabbard, with a handle decorated with white metal binding and set with Urals stones and a large ruby in the center. The blade of the sword was made from light polished metal. On one side was inscribed along the entire length: "We sing glory to the foolhardiness of the brave" and on the other "We sing songs to the foolhardiness of the brave." By the hilt was a border marker with two indicators: on one the USSR and on the other the Chinese East Railroad.

Much later, it was discovered that the ruby had disappeared from the sword handle. It turned out, according to Seva's story, that the young boys in playing had removed this ruby and then lost it without paying any attention. My husband was upset as the thing had been ruined. He reprimanded his son severely but Seva did not suffer any punishment.

Vasilii Konstantinovich devoted a great deal of time to trips to the troops. At that time, Ivan Fedorovich Fedko was in command of the Maritime Troop Group of the OKDVA. The Transbaykal Group was under the command of Gorbachev (I do not recall his name and patronymic) and later Ivan Kensorinovich Gryaznov. Upon returning from his missions, Vasilii Konstantinovich described his professional successes and disappointments and what he had seen there.

Once, having come back from the Maritime Province, my husband related that there, in the Suchan Valley, he had seen a wonderfully beautiful vast "living" carpet of wild lilies...in a kolkhoz stable he saw a woman who was mucking out there. On her feet were...Persian thread stockings. He could not help it but commented to her about the great extravagance and she, without any embarrassment, replied: "But I earned them myself!"

"And she was right and there was nothing I could argue about with this woman," related Vasilii Konstantinovich.

One summer, Seva and I (Nina was no longer with us) traveled with Blyukher to the Maritime Province. Exercises were underway in the troops and we visited the vacation house of the TOF [Pacific Fleet] and also paid a call on the family of the TOF Commander, M.V. Viktorov in Vladivostok. We rested and swam. Nearby was the vacation house of the OKDVA and on the shore we met the families of Khabarovsk servicemen. The children "hunted" tiny crabs, intending to cook them in a fire, but their efforts ended by feeding the crabs to the cats because of the meager catch.

After the end of the military exercises, Vasilii Konstantinovich came for us tanned. He did not go with us to the seashore as the sun did not allow this and we returned home to Khabarovsk with him.

Vasilii Konstantinovich greatly loved the Far East and there never was any question of wanting to work in a different place, although sometimes he grumbled feeling that they were not fond of the OKDVA and did not understand the difficulties here, the hard conditions of life and military service. He was particularly irritated by the poor roads and their absence and by the distance from the center.

V.K. Blyukher smoked Allegro and Stroming cigarettes. Having taken a cigarette, he rolled it in his fingers slowly, tapping the mouthpiece and dropping the released tobacco into an ashtray. When concerned or disheartened he smoked more often. At those times, no one had thought up filtered cigarettes. For this reason, in the mouthpieces of the cigarettes which always were stored in the bedside table of my husband, I carefully inserted cotton moistened with cologne which my husband used with a delicate aroma of carnation. In good company, the men did not deprive themselves of the pleasure of having fun. In the picture on the box of the Stroming cigarettes they would cut out something, substitute a rude gesture and laugh until they cried.... Even worse, even more wicked, in talking about the attack of the Japanese on our frontiers, they thought up a couplet which I cannot reproduce on paper but remember....

Vasilii Konstantinovich was very neat in his clothing, and always wore a tunic with a fresh starched collar. In order to make the collar particularly white, I used rice starch and later there was no need for this as the celluloid and gutta-percha collars appeared and these could be attached to the collar of the tunic by three small buttons. The trousers were smartly cut riding pants, in the summer he wore boots, they always made them for him in the military shop, his feet were small but wide and for this reason his boots were made blunt-toed and of attractive shape. The heels were low, not more than 1.5-2 cm. During the winter, he wore felt boots with leather soles, the toes of which were also flat-rounded, the tops were long, beyond the knee, but turned initially down and then up. The vamps of the boots and the counters were made from dark brown leather while from the counters up there ran leather strips straight across the felt. Many commanders at that time wore such boots.

The belt was wide with a large metal clasp. Until the end of his life, he wore the same sword belt, and this was one from the Civil War. When not on duty he always wore civvies, and was particularly fond of the Russian shirt.

In Khabarovsk, the first restaurant was opened on the corner of K. Marx and Artilleriyskaya Streets. We once went to look at this miracle, a restaurant. The entrance was on the corner. Vasilii Konstantinovich was dressed in trousers of light cream wool, a blue jacket, civilian short boots while I wore a light beige woolen skirt and a blue jacket with low heels. When we entered the "bathhouse dressing room," as Vasilii Konstantinovich called it, the dancers let us through, and the waiter led this "chic couple" to one of the booths which instead of doors had "velvet" (soft plush) drapes. Vasilii Konstantinovich ordered beer with ice and I, at that time a nursing mother, had milk. The shocked waiter evidently thought this was a joke. He served us in great perplexity....

#### Footnotes

1. A.I. Kartunova, "V.K. Blyukher v Kitaye. 1924-1927 gg. Dokumentalnyi ocherk. Dokumenty" [V.K. Blyukher in China. 1924-1927. Documentary Essay. Documents], Moscow, Nauka, 1970, pp 75, 181.

2. There is a copy of the certificate from the Leningrad Civil Registry requested by the V.K. Blyukher Headquarters Museum in Tyumen of 3 January 1988.

3. M.I. Kazanin, "V shtabe Blyukhera: Vospominaniya o Kitayskoy revolyutsii 1925-1927 godov" [At Blyukher's Staff: Memoirs of the Chinese Revolution 1925-1927], Moscow, Nauka, 1966, p 114.

(To be continued)

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#### Letters to Editors

##### Letter Decries Historical "Revisionism"

00010013 VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL  
in Russian No 5, May 89 (signed to press 6 May 89)  
p 17

[Letter to the editor, published under the heading "They Write to Us," by G. Konstantinov from Moscow]

[Text] I read the first issue of the journal and was pleased by the fact that you are in favor of the truth in history as you are publishing documents and memoirs by eyewitnesses. However, the last word should be with the scholars but they, for some reason, have been silent. The history of our past is being debated by those who have never smelled powder, as the former frontline veterans used to say. But there are fewer and fewer of them remaining, and virtually no one from the commanders of the fronts during the war years. The pages of the newspapers and journals have been flooded by outright invective. Stalin has been trampled into the mud and along with him the Army and people who held out in the

bloodiest of all wars. At present, some have even gone so far as to say that the war should not have been won. Under the German occupation we supposedly all lived better than we lived under Stalin and whose name is put in the same rank as Hitler. Recently, I read that Stalin had been an agent of the Tsarist secret police and also that for almost 30 years we had been led by a paranoid. But certainly due to Stalin and the galaxy of our outstanding military leaders, the world was saved from the Black Death of Naziism.

In turning to history, Adamovich, Shatrov, Korotich and others have focused attention of the public on the repressions of 1937 and have not touched at all on the questions of Lenin's struggle against the Bund or Stalin against the Zionist underground in Russia. Certainly in the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s, there was the same situation as during the Brezhnev years with corruption, bribery, protectionism and embezzlement of public property....

I like your heading "They Write to Us." Here I have been attracted by the letter from the history student Yu. Dorodko which correctly raises the question of choosing the correct direction for seeking out the truth in our history as well as the disagreement with the editorial policy of OGONEK and ZNAMYA. And this is actually so. At present, a struggle is underway for the mastery of the press. Comrades Korotich and Yevtushenko are not very fond of when someone argues against them. They become angry and indignant that we all do not think as they do and reject their propaganda of our history. And we do not want it. They want to have a monopoly on the truth. Just look what is done: whatever Ye. Yevtushenko writes, his material is taken up everywhere and published, and the same is true of the articles by Korotich, by the Baklanovs and the Shatrovs. The same names are always appearing.

I am pleased that your journal, judging from the first issue, has been able to escape the tyranny of such articles. The truth, no matter how bitter it may be, should be the truth.

##### Medvedev Article on Death of Frunze Disputed

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in Russian No 5, May 89 (signed to press 6 May 89)  
p 57

[Letter to the editor, published under the heading "They Write to Us" by V.A. Shkayev (Dnepropetrovsk) and M.S. Ladzin (Severodvinsk)]

[Text] Upon instructions of the Buro of the Veterans Council of the 204th Vitebsk Rifle Division, I am writing you the present letter. We join in the assessment of many readers that since mid-1988, your journal has become significantly more interesting, and it is publishing more meaningful and better reasoned materials. We also fully support the opinion voiced in the articles of individual authors that in the press there have appeared very diverse articles which intentionally distort historical reality. In this context we were amazed by the article of



R.A. Medvedev "On the Death of M.V. Frunze and F.E. Dzerzhinskiy" published in Issue No. 3 of this year.

M.V. Frunze was one of the most prestigious party figures and an outstanding military leader. He, like F.E. Dzerzhinskiy, in the course of the August (1924) Plenum of the Party Central Committee and afterwards actively supported the line of the "seven" and the party leadership in the struggle against L.D. Trotsky. For precisely this reason in January 1925, M.V. Frunze was appointed the chairman of the USSR RVS [Revolutionary-Military Council], the people's commissar for military and naval affairs and in February also a member of the Labor and Defense Council.

Stalin's basic struggle for power was still to come. G.Ye. Zinovyev was removed from the membership of the Politburo of the VKP(b) [All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik)] Central Committee only on 23 July, 1926, while L.B. Kamanev and L.D. Trotsky were removed on 23 October 1926 and N.I. Bukharin and A.I. Rykov still later, respectively, on 17 November 1919 and 21 December 1930. Why would Stalin eliminate his active supporters at the given stage (1925) when the outcome of the struggle was still unclear? And particularly such prestigious leaders as M.V. Frunze and F.E. Dzerzhinskiy. A simple comparison of the facts leads one to the conclusion of the falaciousness of the main conclusion of R. Medvedev that M.V. Frunze was eliminated by Stalin and that here the author was calculating merely on sensationalism.

Nor can one agree with the following statements of R. Medvedev: "To refuse the operation would mean to draw to oneself the reproaches of fear and indecisiveness and he agreed reluctantly" (p 57). And this is said about a man who had twice been sentenced to death and whose fearlessness was known even from the times of the Civil War. We do not want to use harsh words, but this is simply rubbish and not an argument of a serious historian.

R. Medvedev goes on to write: "Prof Rozanov who directed the operation took the decision to virtually increase the chloroform dose above the usual rate and this was extremely dangerous for the heart. Inevitably, the question arises of why was such a risk necessary?" (p 57). Does this mean that Rozanov who also treated V.I. Lenin was a murderer? And is R. Medvedev a physician who could determine the method of treatment?

Moreover: "The son of V. Antonov-Ovseyenko, the historian A. Antonov-Ovseyenko, has no doubt that Frunze's death as a result of the operation was a "political act of elimination" which had been organized by Stalin" (p 60). The historian A. Antonov-Ovseyenko possibly does not doubt this and that is his concern. But why is such an assertion needed in an article claiming to be scientific?

The given quotes we feel do not require detailed commentary and their absurdity is obvious.

We feel that by publishing the article of R.A. Medvedev, the journal's editors have retreated from the principle proclaimed by them of no sensationalism. They have clearly capitalized on the name of a now "fashionable" historian in hoping that the publishing of such materials would attract readers to the journal. In our view, a different path should be followed: more checked-out, reliable and profoundly scientific articles. Then there will be the real authority of the journal and not the stir which sometimes is raised around the articles of OGONEK.

V.A. Shkayev  
(Dnepropetrovsk)

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I, for one, do not understand why you have published the article by R.A. Medvedev "On the Death of M.V. Frunze and F.E. Dzerzhinskiy." From its content it follows that a healthy man agreed to an operation, he subjected himself to a fatal risk and only because someone advised him to do this. And this is all the stranger because it was a question of the people's commissar for military and naval affairs, a courageous man and a hero of the Civil War. Who was insisting on the operation? His subordinate K.Ye. Voroshilov and I.V. Stalin of the "1925 model"! Certainly the author has omitted something or exaggerated something. I cannot believe that M.V. Frunze was the person depicted in the article.

Furthermore, the decision for the operation was taken by a physician and one who was an old Russian intellectual who would protect his honor as much as an officer. I doubt that he would allow an operation under the pressure of even Stalin himself (all the more as this was, I repeat, not 1937). In my opinion, the article has been "misaddressed" and its place is in the journal OGONEK or in LITERATURNAYA GAZETA.

M.S. Ladzin  
(Severodvinsk)

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